3 0516 [illegible] 5213

# STORY of WENDELL PHILLIPS

CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

O'SHAUGHNESSY LIBRARY
COLLEGE OF ST. THOMAS
ST. PAUL, MN 55105

WITHDRAWN
UST
Libraries

# THE STORY OF WENDELL PHILLIPS:

## *Soldier of the Common Good*

BY

CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

Author of "Stories of the Great Railroads," "Why I am a Socialist," etc.

CHICAGO
CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY
CO-OPERATIVE

Copyright 1914
By CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL.

JOHN F. HIGGINS
PRINTER AND BINDER
80
376-382 MONROE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

49
5595

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I | The Enlistment | 5 |
| II | The First Battles | 34 |
| III | On the Firing Lines | 47 |
| IV | The Interests Then and the Interests Now | 68 |
| V | Stripping Off the Masks | 82 |
| VI | John Brown and Harper's Ferry | 97 |
| VII | The Man Unafraid Enlists for Labor | 114 |
| VIII | Phillips the Socialist | 131 |
| IX | The Modern War Against Privilege | 149 |
| X | The Attack on the Citadel of Reaction | 165 |


327000

# THE STORY OF WENDELL PHILLIPS

## I

## THE ENLISTMENT

Men and women, all under the sway of a passionate excitement, many half maniacal with rage, have crowded the hall to the limit of its capacity. All are upon their feet, surging, shouting, screaming, gesticulating. On the platform before them is a tall, grave, handsome man, waiting to be heard. Without bravado, without concern, he stands and waits. Part of the audience desires to hear him; part desires to drown his voice with clamors; part is determined to take his life.

He stands and waits. Even his foes, looking upon him there, admit it is a remarkable figure against which they storm. His stature suggests strength and repose, but something more than bulk impresses the men gazing here

upon him. What moves them in spite of themselves is the manifest attitude of a man unafraid, sincere and intent upon his message, not upon himself.

After a time a lull comes in the rioting tornado of noises that has shaken the building. Instantly, this man, standing there so quietly, shoots into the opening a shining arrow of a sentence, straight, barbed, and singing as it flies. At the sound of it, uproar redoubles. On the platform, the speaker stands and waits, an archer with bow drawn. At the next lull, almost before the crowd is aware, he has loosened two of his burning shafts; at the next, three; at the next, the clamor dies away and friends and foes stand under the charm of a silver voice that rings forth one fascinating period after another. Hostile forces cease to contend on the floor. After a moment or two comes a ripple of involuntary applause. Before long the whole rapt audience is cheering. At the end of two hours it thinks the man may have been speaking ten minutes. He bows and leaves the platform amid thundering cheers, and sown behind him are conviction and unperishing seeds of thought.

At any time between 1837 and 1861 such a scene was common in the life of this man.

Of no other orator that ever lived are such triumphs recorded. Wherever he goes he sways men with a new necromancy. Audiences the most bitterly hostile seem unable to withstand his peculiar eloquence; the beautiful bell-like voice is wings to lofty thought, invincible logic and soul-searching words; even the minds fortified against reason learn from his lips. Yet, in his long life of ceaseless activities, he debated for no crown, argued for no fees, strove for no reward, sought no place nor any fame, cared for no achievement for its own sake, and used his unequaled gifts only for some cause of justice or freedom in which he could earn nothing but obloquy, hatred and isolation.

This is the career of Wendell Phillips, the most marvelous and the most inspiring in history. Here was a man endowed with every conceivable advantage for the winning of what we call success: a brilliant and powerful mind trained in the best schools; a gift of extemporaneous and moving eloquence, an attractive presence, great personal magnetism, a famous lineage, social standing and prestige; entered upon a profession he loved and for which he had every qualification, with hosts of powerful friends, a taste for public affairs and public life, an almost unequaled aptitude for debate;

a young man with every avenue of preferment and distinction open to him. He deliberately abandoned them all, and like a religious enthusiast rising above every thought of self, made of his life one long sacrifice on the altars of righteousness.

No man ever gave up more for the sake of his faith. All his brilliant career was wrecked in an instant. His friends and his family deserted and repudiated him. Some of his relatives declared that he was insane and planned to have him confined in an asylum. His mother, to whom he was most tenderly attached, condemned his course. The press covered him with ridicule and abuse; he became a social pariah. For more than twenty years he lived in daily danger of his life, with a price on his head; to face such gatherings as I have described and worse, to stand and defy mobs that were thirsting for his blood, became his all but daily experience. At old Faneuil Hall in Boston men will show you now the little back staircase down which he was whisked to safety after his speeches, while the street in front was filled with those that waited to lynch him. So late as January, 1861, after preaching in Theodore Parker's church, bodyguards of young men must needs surround and protect him to his doors

that he might not be murdered for quoting the word of God against human slavery.

Through all this, as I hope to show, he walked with a beautiful serenity, at peace with God and his own conscience. Without a word of complaint he accepted the place he had made for himself, closed his law office, shut the door upon his profession, took full in the face whatever blows passionate hatred could give him. I think he even had foreknowledge that the malice he aroused in his later years would pursue him after death; that it would deny him his place among the world's orators and belittle his achievements. Yet his philosophy of conscience never failed him; to the end of his life he never ceased from the task he had laid upon himself.

When a cause was won, and in the natural revulsion of popular feeling men sought to make him its hero, he put aside their tributes and demanded their attention to the next unpopular reform.

Compared with such a career, the stories of the men that on grounds of material triumph have won places in the world's regard seem but poor indeed. They toiled for themselves, or for the glory of achievement, for party or faction, or at best for what is called national

success. This man's single and unselfish purpose was to win better conditions for the unfortunate, wherever they might be, to strive against injustice, to further brotherhood, to spread liberty. As ardently as other men sought wealth or power he sought the Common Good. When to this singular and noble aspiration we add a life so pure that he seemed to his contemporaries to be without a human weakness, surely we have a radiant figure before which the statues of our military champions shrink and the records of greasy and self-seeking statesmen grow merely contemptible. In an age half-mad about material success and political honors, such a life is the only model for the young, and the only light worth following. As much as conscience is above appetite he shines above all heroes tainted with a selfish purpose. For reasons that I shall deal with hereafter, every possible effort has been made to conceal and suppress the story of his life; yet none other is so valuable to an American, for none other begins to reveal so clearly how great a power for good is but one man standing alone, if he be not afraid, if he be consecrated to a worthy cause, and if he rise above a personal aim.

Mr. Phillips was by faith and conviction the most ardent of democrats, but his lineage and all his antecedents were what is called aristocratic. His family was, in the snobbish phrase, one of the best in New England; certainly it was one of the most distinguished. It dated in America back to 1630, when the Rev. George Phillips, who had been rector of Buxted, England, left his charge on some issue of faith and conscience and settled at Watertown, in the colony of Massachusetts Bay. From him Wendell was in the seventh generation of descent. All the men between had been eminent in colonial or early American affairs, being noted patriots, clergymen, lawyers, orators or public servants. One was lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts, one was a colonel, one a member of the governor's council, two founded the famous Phillips Academies at Exeter and Andover and a chair of theology at Dartmouth College. Wendell's father, John Phillips, was a graduate of Harvard, a leader of the bar and in the legislature, the first mayor of Boston, and held by the community in profound and deserved respect. He lived on the aristocratic Beacon Hill, where Wendell, a fifth son, was born November 29, 1811, and where he was reared in an atmosphere

of decorum, culture and as much luxury as seemed consistent with the strict piety of his parents.

The Puritan household was serious but kindly; the children were early trained to be self-respecting, self-reliant and faithful to certain rather lofty conceptions of duty and conduct. One of the rules in John Phillips's family was "never ask another to do for you what you can do yourself, and never ask another to do for you what you would not do for yourself if you could." The father was never so much of an aristocrat that he did not believe in working with the hands; each of the boys must learn the use of tools; and under this tuition Wendell became something of a carpenter, a craft for which he never quite lost his preference. Acute observers have pointed out that in America the greatest peril lies in the second generation of the rich, whose members, never trained to labor and reared in parasitic sloth, grow up with a conviction of their superior caste more arrogant and poisonous than can be found elsewhere upon earth. His own native convictions and good sense would have saved Wendell Phillips in any event from such a taint, but there was also a practical grace in the fact that he had learned to work with his

hands. In after years he saw that without such work, without the trained hand as well as the trained mind, there cannot be for individuals or society the most wholesome conditions, whether mentally, physically, or spiritually; and he never forgot the respect he gained at the bench for the men that create the world's wealth and furnish the world's onward impulse.

In his boyhood days he had amusements that showed the unusual bent of his intellect. His near neighbor and playmate was a lad named John Lothrop Motley, himself destined to a distinguished career, and the greatest fun they knew was to get into the Phillips attic, dress themselves in the discarded finery of another generation and enact scenes from dramas of their own and other contriving. Even then Phillips had a taste for declamation, and, it is said, a noticeably fine voice. When he was five years old he was wont to play church, with chairs for auditors and himself in an extemporized pulpit as the preacher. When his father asked him if he did not get tired of preaching (his harangues being apparently of a great length), he said, with a twinkle of dry and characteristic humor:

"No, I don't get tired, but it's rather hard on the chairs."

He was fitted at the famous Boston Latin School (where one of his chums and dearest friends was Charles Sumner) and went thence to Harvard. In college he was distinguished as the most brilliant man in his class and the leader of the aristocratic set. The position and fame of his family gave him a certain prestige, but his wit and talent would have made him conspicuous anywhere. He was a noted athlete; in college, the champion boxer, oarsman, fencer and horseman of his time. He loved these things for their own sake and had pursued them under difficulties, for in those days the Boston schools sternly discouraged athletics. All through his college course men prophesied great things of his after career. Every good gift of nature seemed to be his; a powerful frame, perfect health, a winning presence, a capacious mind and a natural disposition toward things clean and good. His habits were always right; he went through college without a smirch.

When he had been graduated he entered the law school under Judge Story, who seems to have been greatly taken with his pupil and predicted for him an extraordinary career at the bar. From Judge Story's tutelage he went to a law office in Lowell, where he spent

six months and first met Benjamin F. Butler, then an errand boy in another office. Thence he returned to Boston, opened an office of his own in Court Street and began at once to have a large and profitable practise. He was already noted equally for his eloquence and his learning; his friends clearly foresaw that there was no high place in the nation to which he might not reach.

The time was 1833. The nation was sleeping serenely upon a volcano and the few that suspected the fact took pains not to betray their suspicions. About 3,000,000 Americans were held as chattel possessions by about 300,000 other Americans, and that one tremendous fact constituted the volcano. At the time of the founding of the country, all men, North and South, were agreed that slavery was wrong and must some day be abolished, but neither the United States nor any other nation had then awakened to the unspeakable iniquity of the institution. The first slaves in the American territory had been convicts, or white men kidnaped in England and sold to the colonial planters; slavery was therefore a thing familiar and viewed as a sanctioned custom; it had always existed somewhere on earth and against an institution so ancient and re-

spectable the country was disposed to move slowly, even after the eloquent warnings and appeals of Washington and Jefferson. Still, it did move and slavery was well on its way to disappear when Eli Whitney changed all this with his invention of the cotton gin.

That brought in the tremendous power of profits, the greatest force in modern life. Cotton became the staple of the whole Southern country, slave labor was employed in cultivating the cotton, in a short time it was discovered that the annual average profit of a slave's labor was about 35 per cent., and in the face of such enormous returns all moral considerations and all the arguments of the wisest of the fathers naturally were forgotten. The South came to look upon slavery as the one source of its sacred prosperity. The North, getting its share of the cotton business, came to acquiesce in the same view, and for many years the necessity of slavery was not questioned. Many men in the North and some even in the South did not in their souls believe in the thing, but over the average conscience the great fact of 35 per cent. profit rolled an extinguishing flood.

From this state of lethal acquiescence the country began slowly to awake chiefly because

of the ceaseless denunciations of one remarkable man.

William Lloyd Garrison had begun life as an obscure printer, penniless and without advantages of education, and, by dint of repeating his own passionate protest against slavery, had drawn about him a small following of men and women, universally deemed to be crazy. After the passage of the Missouri Compromise in 1820, anti-slavery agitation had been supposed to be silenced. Garrison made himself intensely hated by reviving it.

All the "better elements" at the North sympathized with the South about slavery. Leaders of Northern capital and wealth ardently championed it as beneficent and necessary; Northern commercial classes were united in its support; Northern pulpits found that it was specially ordered and commanded in the Bible and to oppose it was a form of blasphemy; Northern politicians contended in subserviency to the slave-owning element; all the power of Northern Society was exerted in its defense, it being definitely and forever settled that to own slaves was good form, and to object to slave-owning was to read oneself out of the social register. Beyond these were classes that tried to prove by excess of devotion to the slave-

owners' cause the certainty of their own social eminence; classes that violently aped their superiors, and classes that did not care. These latter were generally of an ardent profession of patriotism. Slavery did not concern them; what they wanted was to be left alone and to contemplate undisturbed the surpassing grandeur and greatness of their country, knowing quite well that whatever it did was right

Nothing else in history is so extraordinary as the one fact that all of this condition of moral turpitude, and all of the succeeding turmoil that ended in an appalling war, were based upon the profits of an inconsiderable number of persons.

In 1855, when the total population of the United States was about 30,000,000, the number of persons that owned slaves was 348,214. Only two persons owned so many as a thousand slaves each; and nine owned each between five hundred and a thousand. It was for the sake of the 35 per cent. profit of 348,214 persons that the country came to civil war after years of practical anarchy. Contemplating this stupendous fact, it is evident that we ought to learn history over again; certainly nothing in the existing method of instruction will avail to explain such an anomaly.

But if we can once come to understand it aright there is no other chapter of history that is so valuable for instruction, and principally because of the startling parallel it affords with the national situation to-day.

In 1833 there was no obvious reason why the North should have been particularly alert in championing the cause of the comparatively small band of Southern slave owners; or at least no reason that a just man could deem to be sufficient to excuse support of a crime so hideous as slavery; and yet as to-day millions of men are enrolled in defense of the wage system that have no interest in it, so in those days millions of the bitterest opponents of Abolition were to be found among Northern business men. For these strange facts the hidden reasons then and now are identical. Capital and money sympathized with the South because slaves were property, and when slavery was attacked all property was thought to be attacked; also, because all about the world, capital stands together. The commercial classes sympathized because the Northern mills lived on Southern cotton and Southern cotton was grown by slave labor; therefore, to attack slavery was commercial high treason; it was bad for business. The pulpit naturally followed the lure of the big

pew rents. The politicians naturally followed the political sutlers' wagons; they always do. These affinities are in a way understandable, however grotesque and silly. But the weirdest aspect of all was this thing I have before referred to, the attitude of what is called Society; the weirdest and the most pernicious. Society set the example and pace for all the other elements, far exceeded them in bitterness, inspired them with murderous hatred, applauded the mobs when it did not actually lead them, filled the press with fury, ringed the noses of clergymen and dragged them behind, indurated the public conscience, blasted any agitator with the damnation of its disapproval, and instigated its millions of bourgeois imitators to amazing acts of violence. And the sweet and adequate reason that animated Society was that the South had all the social prestige and was the social dictator. Do you know why? It was furthest removed from damning labor, always the badge of social degradation. The South was more idle than the North; and although slavery made it more idle, it was by virtue of its superior idleness our hereditary and highest aristocracy. Northern Society looked upon Southern Society with such awe-struck reverence as that wherewith all

our Society now regards the English nobility. To be in touch with Southern social leaders was the certificate of gentility; the more you hated the Negro, the more vehemently you defended the institution of slavery, and the more laboriously you argued for the 348,214 and their 35 per cent. profit, the brighter shone your certificate.

Every feature of this situation we have since seen reproduced with marvelous fidelity in the conflict against the wage system.

As to-day we see business men forming "Citizens' Alliances" to uphold the employers in strike difficulties wherein business men have no direct concern, so in 1833 the same element formed voluntary associations to suppress any agitation of the question of slavery. As to-day the business men in a strike zone form the mob that shoots and deports the head of a labor union, so in 1833 and later the same element formed the greater part of the mobs that broke up anti-slavery meetings and tarred and feathered anti-slavery speakers. As to-day every person that agitates the labor issue is blacklisted by the press and shunned by Society, so in 1833 men that objected to slavery found, in the very heart of the North, a taboo raised against them, their families and their

business. As to-day the whole force of commerce is arrayed in defence of the profits arising from the wage system, so in 1833 similar forces were determined there should be no attacks upon chattel slavery.

The close parallel does not fail even when we come to labor, for it must be admitted that in 1833 as to-day labor was often singularly blind to its own injuries. In a material way it suffered from slavery more than any other element, and yet it often seemed indifferent. Not always, for among the strongest opponents of slavery came many from this class; but still the spectacle was sometimes witnessed of working people violently attacking men that were only striving to end a condition inimical to labor. This is not quite the anomaly it seems. We are to remember that the whole subject was most ably and persistently befogged or distorted by practically the entire press, so that the very name of anti-slavery agitation became invested in the public mind with merely hateful and grotesque significance. To be an anti-slavery agitator was to be a pestilent demagogue, an enemy of peace and prosperity, and a traitor to the proud American nation and its flag.

Under the stress of this hysteria very strange

things were said and done. Public men of eminence seemed to be always on their knees to the 348,214 slave owners. Northern governors like Edward Everett professed pride and pleasure in the capture of runaway slaves fleeing toward Canada and freedom. The Rev. Dr. Dewey, a prominent Unitarian clergyman, declared that he would return his own mother to slavery if to do so would help to preserve the Union. The President of Brown University denounced the agitation of the question of slavery and said that for Congress to pass an Abolition act for the District of Columbia would be bad faith. Practically the entire college and university element of the North was of his opinion and strenuously opposed any talk of Abolition. All about the North, known Abolitionists were assaulted, driven from their homes, hunted, tarred and feathered, stripped, beaten, shot at, and sometimes killed. The Governor of South Carolina declared slavery to be the corner-stone of the Republic and demanded that laws should be passed to punish with death any interference with or discussion of it. Edward Everett wished Massachusetts to make a penal offense of any spoken or printed utterance against slavery. Four Southern legislatures demanded of the North-

ern States that all Abolition societies should be suppressed. More than one Northern State started dutifully to obey. The State of Georgia kept a standing reward of five thousand dollars for the kidnaping of William Lloyd Garrison. A wealthy planter circulated a hand-bill offering rewards for the killing of anti-slavery leaders, the prices varying according to the prominence of the man designated. The Congress of the United States, with the aid of Northern votes, passed a law forbidding the offering of petitions to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia or elsewhere.

All for the sake of the 35 per cent. profits of the 348,214 persons that held slaves!

The newspapers, preachers, editors, teachers, news agencies, college presidents, social reformers, philanthropists and tradesmen that in our own day have championed the 500,000 persons deriving benefit from the wage system have never displayed a more touching fidelity.

Against this iron-clad fortress of prejudice Garrison began to hammer with his bare hands. At first nobody heeded him. Then the commercial gentlemen looked down the wall side, saw him at work all alone and laughed. Then he began to annoy their fat souls by disturbing their quiet, so they undertook to kill him. It

was one of their genial attempts in this direction that started Wendell Phillips upon the work of his life. In Washington Street, Boston, a mob of "gentlemen of standing and property," a broadcloth mob of the leaders and saviors of Society, had seized Garrison and was about to hang him. In Boston; cradle of liberty and that sort of thing; in Boston, on October 21, 1835. Garrison had been saying in Boston a few words in favor of human freedom, and so a mob of gentlemen had a rope around him and was dragging him along Washington Street to hang him. He had said his few words to a company of about thirty women that sat in a hall they had hired and paid for to hear him, and the mayor of Boston had burst into the room and had driven the women into the street; whereupon the mob of gentlemen seized Garrison, and was dragging him along with the rope around him to hang him for talking in favor of human liberty. In Boston, fifty-nine years after the Declaration of Independence.

Phillips was sitting in his office nearby and heard the uproar the gentlemen made, for of course they were very angry. He went forth to learn the occasion. There was Garrison with the rope around him being dragged down

the street. Phillips looked attentively upon his face, for he had never seen the like before. It was very pale, but calm and sweet, as if the man were sustained to his death by some noble and lofty passion, like that of a Christian martyr. The lips uttered no protest and the hands were not lifted against the rope; the man strode along, erect, resolute and self-contained.

"Who is that?" said Phillips to another spectator of this scene.

"Why, that's Garrison — the damned Abolitionist, and they're going to hang him!"

The mob and the violence shocked and appalled Phillips's fastidious sense of decency and reciprocal rights. He thought that the Boston regiment, a famous militia band of which he was an officer, ought to be called out to disperse the rioters. His colonel pointed out to him that the regiment was in the mob.

He went back to his office and began to think profoundly about "the damned Abolitionist" and his cause. He had never before paid much attention to the slavery issue; in a general way he was opposed to slavery, but, like all other young men in his station, he deemed it settled by the Missouri Compromise and not a vital question of the day. But to hang a man for his opinions — that assaulted the very

foundations of the faith he had built for himself. Because the key note of his character and to a great extent the explanation of his career, lay in this one fact, that mentally he was a child of revolution. He had made close and sympathetic studies of the American and French revolutions and arrived at the conclusion that in all secular history these were the most important events. His researches had not revealed to him the theory later day thinkers have discovered, apparently by clairvoyance, that the American struggle was carried on by smugglers and other depraved men for merely selfish ends; that Samuel Adams was a trickster and Washington and LaFayette a pair of congenial land thieves. To his mind the American revolution represented a great forward step in the human advance and the men that took part in it were soldiers in the eternal cause of man. Among these his favorite hero was James Otis standing forth to defy the king and to risk his life for free speech. Free speech seemed always to Phillips the most important of human rights, for it was the right by which man defended the others. But, seventy years after the heroic achievement of James Otis, a mob takes the place of a king and denies the same right that Otis upheld. Neither the king

nor the mob could possibly be right; Garrison was a still more heroic figure than Otis. As to the cause that he spoke for, how could human slavery be defended or even excused? Thus he pondered, that day and many days afterward, while he tried to adjust some balance between the accepted state of society and the principles he knew for truth.

He was in fact, close upon the first great turning point in his life and as so often happens in such cases a mere accident brought in the deciding factor. Not long after the day of the respectable mob in Washington Street, Phillips and Sumner were invited to join a coaching party to Greenfield and to meet a young woman described as charming, talented and brilliant, by name, Ann Terry Greene. The morning dawned cold and stormy and Sumner refused to go forth, declaring that no young woman was worth braving such a storm to meet. Phillips kept the engagement. Ann Terry Greene proved to be one of the thirty women that the mayor of Boston had driven from their hall on the day that Garrison so narrowly escaped lynching. She was a fervent Abolitionist; she talked Abolition to Phillips all the way to Greenfield and back. He became fully converted to the cause, fell in love with

his instructress, married her October 12, 1837, and took into his life one of its most powerful influences.

As a rule, a man that does anything unusual in this world does it under the inspiration of some woman. Whether what he does makes for good or ill commonly depends upon the woman's nature. It happened that Ann Terry Greene was one of the most extraordinary women of her times. She was a natural insurgent and natural reformer. To some women the world is a mere parade ground for dress patterns. To her it was a battlefield resounding with ceaseless conflict. All about her she saw wrong and injustice; she yearned and burned to have every wrong abolished and every injustice corrected. Hers was no limited field of vision; any kind of injustice, anywhere, was enough to stir her resentment. By some irony of fate, being a soul so combative, she was, or thought she was, a helpless invalid, so that her part in the conflict must be exerted through others. She made of her husband her capable soldier and he testified that all his life she went before him into every cause he espoused.

At the house of Miss Greene's uncle, Henry G. Chapman, not long after the coaching party, Phillips made the acquaintance of Garrison.

The two were irresistibly drawn to each other. Phillips perceived that here was a prophet bearing the fire of a great cause and upon him slowly settled the conviction that his place was at the side of this pure-souled apostle of righteousness. In such an issue he could not palter with his conscience, nor refuse to be honest with himself, nor count the cost of being true. Deliberately he came to this decision; having reached it, weighing all together, he gave himself up to follow it without reservation. On March 28, 1837, he attended the quarterly meeting at Lynn of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and there he made his first Abolitionist speech.

Next day the strange news went about aristocratic Boston as of a great and appalling disaster that men could hardly credit. Nothing in the history of the American Brahmin caste had so shaken its moldy fibres. Wendell Phillips had been its pet, its pride, the example of heredity and lineage to which it pointed, the brilliant son of its first family. He might have rolled drunken in the gutter, or wasted himself in dissipation, or committed crimes, and held his caste unimpeached. But to attack existing conditions and to range himself with the

victims of those conditions was to be indeed beyond hope.

In the face of the self-made pariah, Society indignantly slammed the doors, while his family writhed in the agony of an ineffable shame. If he had only died! said his relatives; the grave had no pang like this. At the present distance and to souls not perfectly attuned to Society's distinctions there appears a certain element of the comic in their distress, but it was to them very real and tragic. Some tried to parry the blow by saying he had gone suddenly insane; you can not blame Respectable Persons for the acts of a madman. In the house of Worldly Wiseman the puzzle was unreadable. That a young man with every advantage and every chance of success should cast away his life was inconceivable folly. Some commentators found relief in the fortunate fact that his poor, dear father had not lived to see this day. All the cost of his education wasted, all the traditions of his family dishonored, a young life already in ruins — how melancholy was this spectacle! But such were the fruits of the spirit of social unrest abroad in the land, and thus was youth misled by pestilent agitators.

Upon the young man thus sadly gone astray these comments fell without visible effect. Having determined which way his duty led, thither he went rejoicing. The storm of criticism he faced with the same composure with which he faced mobs; no one ever saw that under that faultless bearing he was hurt; but beyond doubt he paid the price, full measure. He loved friendship, he was among the most companionable of men, he valued highly the approval of his family; it was not without a wrench that he took himself outside of his caste. For almost fifty years there poured upon his head a ceaseless flood of hatred, ridicule and misrepresentation; no man heard him complain nor repine at his lot, and the bitterest personal attack seldom provoked any retort, even when he was outrageously lied about. All he took in silence, looking far ahead to the goal and thinking of himself as an instrument of reform; an instrument whose feelings and fame were of no importance. Silently he withdrew from the old scenes and the old circles and took for his new friends Garrison and the men and women that, like Garrison, held that in the face of monstrous injustice the just man has no right to a life of ease and pleasure. Other historic figures have enrolled themselves in unpopular

causes, but usually, I think, for the sake of personal aim or a personal hate. Wendell Phillips remains the one conspicuous example of unstained purity of motive. From the causes he espoused he had nothing to gain but loneliness, obscurity and disgrace.

## II

## THE FIRST BATTLES

His real entrance as orator and agitator upon the turbulent stage of his day was made in dramatic fashion. On December 8, 1837, when he had just passed his twenty-sixth birthday, a mass meeting was called at Faneuil Hall to protest against the murder of the Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, at Alton, Illinois; an event that was to be great in American history, though at the time no one so deemed it. Lovejoy, who was not an Abolitionist, by the way, had been the editor of a religious newspaper at St. Louis. A Negro in St. Louis killed an officer that was trying to arrest him and a mob broke into the jail where the Negro was confined and burned him alive. Lovejoy, in his journal, commented severely upon the farcical judicial proceedings that followed this event and the mob wrecked his printing office.

He moved what was left of his enterprise to Alton, on what was called Free Soil, where he

believed he would be safe. Two presses that he landed were successively destroyed by mobs. He obtained a third and asked protection of the mayor. The mayor said he was unable to preserve order, but authorized Lovejoy to defend himself. A mob gathered, killed Lovejoy and threw his press into the river.

In Boston, the number of persons that desired to protest against this outrage was not large but was fairly courageous. To lessen the extreme likelihood of bloodshed the meeting was held in the morning. Faneuil Hall was filled, more than half of the audience being without sympathy with the purpose of the meeting and many disposed to make trouble if they could. William Ellery Channing and others spoke; resolutions were offered denouncing Lovejoy's murder; when James Tricothie Austin, attorney-general of Massachusetts, well known, able and popular, pushed his way to the edge of the gallery and delivered a skilful and bitter attack upon the resolutions and the previous speakers. He defended the mob at Alton, likening it to the men that threw the tea into Boston Harbor and to other patriots of the American Revolution. Lovejoy, he said, had brought his death upon himself and had died as the fool dieth; and he

fiercely rebuked Dr. Channing, who was a clergyman, for taking part in the present meeting.

At Austin's first sentence, the pro-slavery element in the hall cheered vehemently, and as he proceeded it was evident that he was carrying with him the majority of his hearers. The defeat of the resolutions was imminent, as the contending factions roared and struggled. Phillips was standing among the spectators on the main floor, for in those days Faneuil Hall had no seats. As Austin ended amid tremendous cheering, Phillips unexpectedly leaped upon the platform and stood forth to answer him. The crowd saw before them a young man, tall, fair, with face and form expressive of power and resolution, waiting to speak. Its sheer curiosity silenced it and, in a moment, out boomed, in that strange, melodious voice, the first piercing sentence.

Clamor redoubled at once; there were cries of "Question!" "Go on!" "Hear him!" and so on. With the next lull in the storm came the next sentence; in another moment the young orator was launched upon one of his most famous orations. It was a faultless specimen of his style; compact, restrained, direct, without a wasted word, and in spite of the re-

straint, burning with feeling. It contained some immortal sentences.

Sir, when I heard the gentleman lay down principles which place the murderers of Alton side by side with Otis and Hancock, with Quincy and Adams, I thought those pictured lips [pointing to the portraits in the hall] would have broken into voice to rebuke the recreant American — the slanderer of the dead!

In one passage he struck in this, his first great public address, a keynote to which in the closing years of his life he was often to return, and I think it is interesting that he had found so early a broad, sociological basis for his faith.

Presumptuous to assert the freedom of the press on American ground! Is the assertion of such freedom before the age? So much before the age as to leave one no right to make it because it displeases the community? Who invents this libel on his country? It is this very thing which entitles Lovejoy to greater praise; the disputed right which provoked the Revolution — taxation without representation — is far beneath that for which he died!

At this, the audience, which had been hanging intent upon his words as they came flying forth without halt in the perfect mastery of his art, broke into a violent clamor of protest and the disorder began again. Possibly Phillips had stirred it for the express purpose of quell-

ing it with one of his irresistible climaxes. At the first cessation of the noise he said:

> One word, gentlemen. As much as thought is better than money, so much is the cause in which Lovejoy died nobler than a mere question of taxes. James Otis thundered in this hall when the king did but touch his pocket. Imagine, if you can, his indignant eloquence had England offered to put a gag upon his lips!

That was the turning point of the battle. Thenceforward he carried his audience on the surge of his eloquence and when he made an end the resolutions were carried overwhelmingly.

The impressions made by this speech upon the persons who heard it seem to have been extraordinary. Dr. Channing frequently referred to it as an amazing flight of eloquence, the power of Phillips's voice over the angry crowd seeming to be almost inexplicable. Oliver Johnson, who was present that day, thought that the report of it was only a pale reflection of the lightning that came from the orator's lips. One effect of it was to put Phillips into a commanding position in the anti-slavery movement, and another was to accelerate the isolation that had been coming upon him from the time he announced his adhesion to Garrison's cause. His law practise was dwindling;

a man cannot very well practise law in a community, part of which regards him as a lunatic and the rest as a dangerous firebrand. He had become the idol of the little band of Abolitionists, but he had the intense hatred of the aristocracy for he had committed what is in all ages the unpardonable crime. He had turned against his own caste.

In 1839 he took his wife abroad for her health and in London was the hero of a singular episode that I must tell later. In 1841 he returned to Boston. Soon afterward occurred there one of the first of the famous fugitive slave cases that were subsequently the occasion of some of his most searching eloquence. A Virginia Negro named Latimer, having made his escape from his owner, was detected and arrested. An effort was made to prevent his return to slavery and a Boston judge ruled that the slave was property, the Constitution of the United States authorized the owner of slave property to seize it wherever he found it, and Latimer must be returned. The event struck deep at Phillips's basic faith. To his mind the people of Massachusetts were impelled by reverence for a piece of parchment to commit an act of abhorrent wrong and injustice, violating natural conscience and the rights that

are above all constitutions. He vehemently protested at Faneuil Hall, but he did more than protest. In accordance with his belief that a man's life should in every way square with his convictions, he closed his law office and abandoned his profession. A lawyer swears to uphold the Constitution of the United States. To Mr. Phillips, that Constitution, inasmuch as it recognized and defended man's ownership in a fellow man, was "a covenant with death and a league with hell." Therefore he could not consistently uphold it. He took a small house at No. 26 Essex Street, and thenceforth, isolated except for his fellow Abolitionists, he devoted all his life to battling for the reforms in which he believed.

One of these in which he was a conspicuous leader sought to improve the status of women. His mind was so constituted that against any condition of injustice, anywhere, in Ireland or Russia, in the attitude of men toward women or of the State toward prisoners, it instinctively revolted. In the view of Mr. Phillips, as of Mr. Garrison, women were entitled to every right enjoyed by men, and the laws and customs based upon the alleged inferiority of women were fossils remaining from the barbarous ages. Many women were in the anti-

slavery movement; indeed, its women were often abler than its men. Lydia Maria Child, Lucretia Mott, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, and Abby Kelly Foster were clearly the intellectual equals of any living men. But the custom was very rigid that women should take no part in public affairs; they could not vote and apparently it was held that they had properly no other rights. Garrison and Phillips strove to give them equal place with men in the Abolition movement, and it is an odd fact that this was the first rock upon which the anti-slavery movement split.

Those that believed woman's part in life to be silence and knitting withdrew and flocked by themselves. Presently they became involved in schemes of compromise and political action (to which Garrison and Phillips were opposed) and trickled into the short-lived and futile Liberty party, finally emerging from that barren waste to rejoin their former comrades with actual Abolition in sight.

But the issue about women came sharply to a head while the Phillipses were in London. They had been appointed delegates to an international anti-slavery conference organized by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. In Great Britain the prejudice against admit-

ting women to any share in public affairs was even stronger than in America, and woman's position in general was worse. The men in charge of the convention refused to allow Mrs. Phillips and the other American women delegates to be admitted. As soon as the deliberations were opened, Mr. Phillips sprang at the face of British conservatism with a resolution for the seating of all delegates with credentials from any anti-slavery society. British conservatism was painfully shocked. Mr. Phillips shocked it again by delivering, in the debate upon his resolution, a powerful argument in behalf of equality for women. It was heard far beyond the convention hall, for the press took up the issue it raised and a fierce discussion arose that can hardly be said to have ceased again until it came to flower in the great British suffrage movement of this day.

But in the convention hall Mr. Phillips was defeated. The strength of British conservatism was too great. For no other reason than custom, the women delegates were not admitted to the floor of the convention but were herded into the gallery as spectators, where, when Garrison came, he insisted upon taking his place among them. He would not sit as a delegate in a convention that declared men to be

better than women. Phillips continued to fight from the floor. He and Garrison became exceedingly unpopular in consequence and at the close of the conference were conspicuously slighted at the final meeting in Exeter Hall. Incidentally, the conference failed to be of any use to the anti-slavery movement, which it was intended to foster, but proved of much use to the woman suffrage movement, which it was intended to discourage — a pleasing illustration of the eternal futility of the reactionary mind.

It was when her husband left her to make his argument in behalf of women that Ann Terry Phillips addressed to him a remark that subsequently became famous. She said:

"Wendell, don't shilly-shally."

There was, in fact, the smallest likelihood that he should ever shilly-shally about anything, but the mind of Mrs. Phillips, shut in an apparently frail body, was of such uncompromising resolution that she sometimes frightened the casual listener, and what was unpardonable weakness in her view would have seemed to the average person no more than an agreeable amenity.

In his arguments for woman suffrage Phillips, in his usual lucid way, stated the whole case and seeing far beyond any of his contem-

poraries foreshadowed the industrial woman of the Twentieth century. One of his admirable addresses contained this:

The subject is so large, that it might well fill days instead of hours. It covers the whole surface of American society. It touches religion, purity, political economy, wages, the safety of cities, the growth of ideas, the very success of our experiment. If this experiment of self-government is to succeed, it is to succeed by some saving element introduced into the politics of the present day. You know this: your Websters, your Clays, your Calhouns, your Douglases, however intellectually able they may have been, have never dared or cared to touch that moral element of our national life. Either the shallow and heartless trade of politics had eaten out their own moral being, or they feared to enter the unknown land of lofty right and wrong.

Neither of these great names has linked its fame with one great moral question of the day. They deal with money questions, with tariffs, with parties, with State law; and if, by chance, they touch the slave question, it is only like Jewish hucksters trading in the relics of saints. The reformers — the fanatics, as we are called — are the only ones who have launched social and moral questions. I risk nothing when I say, that the Anti-Slavery discussion of the last twenty years has been the salt of this nation: it has actually kept it alive and wholesome. Without it our politics would have sunk beyond even contempt. So with this question. It stirs the deepest sympathy; it appeals to the highest moral sense; it inwraps within itself the greatest moral issues. Judge it, then, candidly,

carefully, as Americans; and let us show ourselves worthy of the high place to which God has called us in human affairs.

And again, on another occasion, speaking of the ballot, he said:

We claim it therefore, for woman. The reply is that woman has not sense enough. If she has not, so much the more shame for your public schools,— educate her! If God did not give her mind enough, then you are brutes; for you say to her: "Madam, you have sense enough to earn your own living,— don't come to us!" You make her earn her own bread, and if she has sense enough to do that, she has sense enough to say whether Fernando Wood or Governor Morgan shall take one cent out of every hundred to pay for fireworks. When you hold her up in both hands and say: "Let me work for you! Don't move one of your dainty fingers! We will pour wealth into your lap, and be ye clothed in satin and velvet, all ye daughters of Eve!"— then you will be consistent in saying that woman has not sense enough to vote; but if she has sense enough to work, to depend for her bread on her work, she has sense enough to vote.

Then, again, men say, "She is so different from man that God did not mean that she should vote." Is she? Then I do not know how to vote for her. One of two things is true: She is either exactly like man — exactly like him, teetotally like him, —and if she is, then a ballot box based upon brains belongs to her as well as to him; or she is different, and then I do not know how to vote for her. If she is like me, so much like me that I know just as well how to vote for her as she knows how

to vote for herself, then — the very basis of the ballot box being capacity — she, being the same as I, has the same right to vote. And if she is so different that she has a different range of avocations and powers and capacities, then it is necessary she should go into the legislature, and with her own voice say what she wants, and write her wishes into statute books, because nobody is able to interpret her. Choose which horn of the dilemma you please.

More than half a century has elapsed since Phillips made this point, and in all the discussion there has been on the question of woman suffrage nobody has been able to refute or evade its logic. But he would have been amazed if at that time any one had assured him that half a century would pass before his countrymen awoke to an act of justice so obvious and necessary as equal and universal suffrage.

## III

## ON THE FIRING LINES

The first great fact persistently thrust upon the attention of every investigator of the story of slavery in America is the tremendous and wide-spreading power that always pertains to great profits.

Profits seem to breed their own power and miraculously to emanate it; and from small profits to great the degree of power generated seems to increase in geometrical ratio. In our own day we have seen clearly enough and often enough how apparently irresistible is the power put forth by the Controlling Interests that reap most of the huge profits of the existing system; and the power exerted by the 35 per cent. profits of slavery was akin to this. As in our own day, secret, insidious influences started from the seat of profits and ran out of sight across the country until they echoed in some print or pulpit for the benefit of the profit-makers and the injury of anybody that at-

tacked them. Exactly what the Socialists are to-day in the columns of the kept press the Abolitionists were sixty years ago. The spirit of profits has changed not at all and the tactics have changed but little. Every man that offends them is still a liar and a scoundrel; still every exposition of their thievery and graft is extravagance, falsehood and vituperation; and still all the forces of education, the press, literature and the church are employed to overwhelm with discredit whomsoever shall stand and clamor for justice.

Exactly so it was with the Abolitionists, and the heaviest burden of the hatred they aroused fell upon Phillips. To read now what was said of him, even in the Northern press, between 1837 and 1861, you would think, if unenlightened, that you were reading of a man incapable of telling the truth about anything and given over to depraved and wanton designs against the prosperity of his country and the fame of its best and purest citizens. It is a very curious fact that in all ages the means of directing public opinion and of writing history are almost exclusively in the hands of reactionary influences. Phillips was at the mercy of these. Naturally he belonged to the educated and literary circles. North and South they

turned upon him with a ferocity of hatred only to be paralleled in the case of the leader of a labor union that threatens profits with a strike or of a literary man that allies himself with the cause of the toilers.

The power of the slave-holders' profits was as absolute in all branches of the national government as the power of the Controlling Interests has ever been in our time, and then as now it was a power that rotted the courts and made a travesty of justice. As in these days the Federal bench is filled from the ranks of the railroad and corporation attorneys, so in those days no man could hope to become a judge unless he was known to be sound in his subserviency to the slave-holding Interests. This was necessary because court cases affecting issues of slavery were as common then as railroad cases are now.

In all this the North, controlled by its business men and their affiliations, tamely acquiesced, although sometimes it was a condition that reacted severely upon individual business men. Of this I must cite here one example for the sake of its many-sided illumination of conditions North and South and for its light upon the career of Wendell Phillips.

In the early forties, free-born colored men,

natives and citizens of Massachusetts, that were sailors on Northern ships, were exposed to great danger in Southern ports. Especially in Charleston they were liable to be arrested on fictitious charges, to be thrown into jail and to be sold into slavery, whence they could seldom be rescued. In the farcial courts of justice presided over by the slave-owners' puppets a man thus seized had as little chance as a labor union has in a State court now.

For this aggression, utterly lawless as it was, the slave-holding element was not without its pretense of an excuse. Slaves were continually escaping to the North and their owners found increasing difficulty in recovering them. Many thousands of such fugitives had made their way through the Northern States to Canada, where they were safe under the protection of the British flag. Abolitionists like Garrison and Phillips were frankly engaged in aiding these escapes, and, as the center of the Abolitionist movement was in Massachusetts, the slave-owning interests retaliated by kidnaping Massachusetts colored men that ventured into Southern ports — a fact aptly pointing Garrison's assertion (subsequently appropriated by Lincoln) that the nation could not endure half slave and half free.

So long as the slavery issue was one of abstract right and wrong, the better element of Massachusetts, the business men and the commercial classes generally, sided with the South. But the seizure of these seamen affected them differently. They owned ships. Sometimes a ship that left Boston full-handed for Charleston would return half-manned because its Negro sailors had been seized and imprisoned. On its voyage it must pass Cape Hatteras, a dangerous place for under-manned shipping. Property — sacred property — was therefore put in peril of loss. Consciences that cared nothing about the wrongs and sufferings of three million slaves awoke to action and Massachusetts loudly protested.

Mr. Samuel Hoar, founder of a famous family, was then an eminent citizen of the State. With other commissioners he was sent on a peaceful embassy to Charleston to see if the slave-holding Interests could be induced to give over slave-catching and kidnaping when these practises affected Boston pocket-books. As soon as Mr. Hoar's presence was known in Charleston his life was in danger. A mob gathered about his hotel, and if the Governor of the State had not ordered his deportation under an armed guard he would have been lynched.

Mr. Phillips, eagerly watching every day's developments for texts, seized this occasion for one of his most famous speeches. He pointed out that in refusing protection to Mr. Hoar, South Carolina had violated the express provisions of the Constitution and that for the insult put upon Massachusetts no redress was obtainable within the Union. He therefore demanded that since citizens of Massachusetts were deprived of their constitutional rights in South Carolina, and the national Government would not protect them therein, Massachusetts should protect herself and decline to recognize a Union thus already nullified by one of the States.

Officially, Massachusetts was still dominated by the influences that sympathized with slave-holding. In silence it swallowed the insults, but upon the masses of its people the effect was otherwise. State pride was touched, and from the time that Mr. Hoar so narrowly escaped the Charleston mob, a growing sentiment questioned the righteousness of a slave-owning oligarchy that had cast aside all pretense of civilized restraint and openly returned to the methods of the jungle. In all these progressions it seems to be true that the uttered word of truth must be reinforced by some object les-

son, patent to all men's eyes; neither is wholly effective alone. Phillips's speech, in spite of the usual efforts to suppress or ignore it, served to carry home the significance of Mr. Hoar's narrow escape from the savages of Charleston, and from that date Boston as a whole was never again utterly indifferent on the slave question.

Yet observe how strange was the sequel this story was to have in other days. Phillips had used the power of his eloquence in behalf of Samuel Hoar's cause. Forty-two years after Mr. Hoar's escape, Wendell Phillips died in Boston. Samuel Hoar was still alive. So great and so savage was the hatred Mr. Phillips had drawn upon himself in the closing years of his life that not even his death could soften it. Among the bitter taunts flung upon his grave was one from Samuel Hoar. He said that he did not attend Wendell Phillips's funeral, but he approved of it.

After the decision in the fugitive slave case, to which I referred in the first chapter of this chronicle, he was out of Society, out of his profession, out of the church, out of all old ties and associations; out, to a great extent, of the view of the community that generally abhorred him. He no longer looked upon himself as an

American nor upon the Constitution as a thing to which he owed allegiance. He was become a man without a country. In later years he resumed his civic duties, but to his death his isolation remained and grew. Hatred seems to have been allotted to him as fame to other men. Year after year his figure, the loneliest in history, rose upon the scene like that rock in the Indian Ocean that is so strange and solitary a monument in a wide range of empty sea.

So situated, he labored incessantly in the causes to which he had given over his life. He became the general agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and largely directed its campaigns; he wrote and published pamphlets, some signed and some anonymous, attacking slavery from every possible angle of advantage; he furnished articles to the small but vigorous Abolitionist press; he used his modest income in the support of the movement; he made his house a refuge for Abolitionists and fugitive slaves; and wherever and whenever he could find opportunity he raised his voice in those eloquent protests that no man can read now with unquickened pulses. Behind his most innocent address, as a masked battery, he carried Emancipation. Thus he had a lecture with the attractive title "Street Life in

Europe," made from his observations abroad. But when a rural lyceum or lecture course was induced to accept it, men heard behind the street scenes of Europe the strenuous insistence against slavery in America. In at least one famous instance he managed in this way to break through the crust of Northern culture and indifference and to drag before the conscience of a reluctant Northern community the great moral issue of the day. The place was probably the last on earth to suggest itself to you. It was Concord, Massachusetts, sacred in American literature and famous for one of the most heroïc deeds of the American revolution.

In our day we sometimes wonder that influences in the community apparently isolated from the Interests, should nevertheless be ardent in their defense. Even this mystery had its counterpart in the day of the Abolition struggle, for in many a remote New England village, where no commercial concern could be pleaded, the spirit was hot for the South and slavery, and men were not safe if they talked for Abolition. Venerable ministers of the Gospel maintained from the pulpit the righteousness of the slave market and its divine sanction. In behalf of the principle of

slavery, men otherwise of peaceful walk were ready at all times to fight and to shed blood, although no interest of theirs, near nor remote, was menaced, but only of the 348,214 persons in the South, that for an annual profit of 35 per cent. held slaves.

It was against a flood of hysteria like this that Phillips made incessant war, going for inspiration again and again to the spirit of the French and American revolutions. His uttermost conviction was that there could be no such thing as a republic where equal rights were denied to any part of the population, and, in his own powerful phrase, a government that tolerated human slavery was only a pirate ship. While he thundered against the evil as a whole, he lost no chance to attack its ramifications and by-products, and through one of these ramifications he now struck effectively at that snobbery in so-called social circles that had closed their doors to him.

It was then the custom throughout the North for persons of social eminence or social ambitions to prove their superiority and right to a seat among the elect by showing bitterness against the colored race, just as to-day persons of similar mentality and similar ambitions make a point of sneering at labor unions and

scorning "the lower orders." This was in all communities an easy badge of gentility. In Boston, the highest circles of society had secured a condition under which colored children were not allowed to go to the public schools used by the white children, but were herded by themselves in inferior buildings where they received inferior tuition. Mr. Phillips, most conscientious of democrats, despised the distinction of color made by the School Committee, despised its origin, which he knew well enough to be a smug and greasy snobbery, and declared war upon it. First he presented a petition that colored children be admitted to the white schools. Some element of chance seemed always to fight on his side; he could hardly have foreseen what was to happen to his advantage in this case. The Committee, in denying the petition, made the blunder of offering its so-called reasons, backed by the opinion of distinguished but foolish counsel. Nothing could better have suited Mr. Phillips's purposes. He tore into the "reasons," shattering them with his terrible sarcasm, and then, using his great legal knowledge and powers of argument, he made of the city solicitor's opinion a thing of shreds and patches. Here, too, shone forth another of his dominant traits, for no man was

ever more relentless in his cause or less knowing of discouragement. In his steady, pertinacious, unflinching way, he brought up the same issue next year and the next, always defeated and always making headway. At last he got his case before the Legislature, and in 1854 he forced it through to victory. The law of the State was changed to make impossible the discrimination he opposed and he had the satisfaction of seeing colored children admitted to the schools on equal footing with the white.

Fourteen years passed from the beginning of that struggle until his steady fighting won success.

Meantime, living his own life in his own way at his Essex Street home, and engaged daily in the anti-slavery struggle as the business of his Soul, he had many other activities similarly inspired. To him any injustice anywhere demanded from a just man all possible protest. He looked upon the human race as no more than beginning to emerge from bondage; the typical, complacent American view was that here, at least, it had topped the summit of its journey. This difference and one other make him stand out so sharply against his times; the other being that with all the heart of him he abhorred

compromise, and compromise was the choicest idol of his day.

"Who can not hate can love not"

sings Swinburne. Phillips had an extraordinary capacity for hating all things evil, but first of all he hated the idea of striking a bargain with conscience. Right was right to be followed purely for its own sake and for no other reward. Wrong was wrong and not to be trafficked with. In the midst of the furious conflict with slavery that he tried to provoke and to aggravate he found time to deliver powerful arguments in favor of other causes he held to be right and just: in favor of woman's suffrage, against capital punishment, for the removal of an unjust judge, in behalf of Ireland, against the sodden public conscience that views with indifference the lost souls of the street. Amid all these efforts and still giving his unflagging assistance to Garrison in the details of the anti-slavery campaign he found time to prepare and deliver scholarly orations like that on "The Lost Arts"; biographical tributes, like those on "Daniel O'Connell" and "Toussaint L'Ouverture," and stimulating addresses on Christianity and morals. His mind

seemed a prodigious engine that rested not but at all times labored full steam ahead.

His private walk was no less extraordinary. Mrs. Phillips, to whom he was wholly devoted, was a chronic invalid and for forty-six years he was her nurse, attendant and always cheerful companion. He did much of his work at night while she slept in an adjoining room. She had a bell at her hand with which she was wont to summon him. One night he made count of her calls and they totalled twenty-six. Yet it is the unvarying testimony on all sides that he never once departed from the one attitude of kindly devotion; he was invariably the gallant and attentive lover. In a season when she seemed to be more than usually ill he did not leave the house for sixty days, spending all his waking hours about her bed side. Surely an exceptional man!

The charm of his wonderful oratory and the magnetism of his presence sometimes won him a hearing from assemblies that detested his opinions. Thus "The Lost Arts" spread his fame and enlarged his audiences. It is recorded of many communities that with trepidation and misgiving they engaged him to deliver this lecture, expecting to see some raging person, full of sound and fury and bellowing like

a bull; for newspapers had created and persistently spread the belief that he was a fire-eater, a dangerous maniac and an unqualified liar. When he stepped upon the stage, so evidently a man of learning and refinement, and with his bell-like voice began so quietly to address them in polished phrases, speaking indubitable truth, they were stricken with a comical amazement.

The very style of his oratory was a startling innovation. At that time and for long afterward, the common conception of an orator was of a man violently swinging his arms and sing-songing rhetorical and flowery phrases in a way that burlesqued nature. Mr. Phillips used very few gestures and these most modest; he never shouted; he never seemed to be excited; he never sing-songed; he spoke to five thousand exactly as he would speak to one. His compelling power lay in the force of his ideas, in his simple, direct language, in the compact and mighty phrases into which he wrought his words. He revolutionized oratory in America. Since his time it has never been easy for Bombast to carry off the fustian noise that alone had been popular among us. Something most extraordinary, and to this day unequaled, lay in the mere arrangement of his

sentences. They could not have been studied, for he never wrote out anything he was to say, and in his most extempore addresses the same quality appears. I mean he could always so marshal his words, nervous, swift, vital, stinging as they were, that they had a subtle rhythm and melodic import aside from their burning verbal significance. He was, I suppose, the clearest-minded man that ever confronted an audience and swayed it to his will. Analyzing his speeches now, it appears that his mind worked simultaneously in two divisions. One was supervising and directing the immediate utterance; the other was arranging his argument far ahead. Greater intellectual feats than these are not recorded of any other orator. Webster, Chatham, Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Clay, prepared with great care the periods with which they charmed their hearers. This man at a moment's notice would speak with all the perfection of form and beauty of married thought and word attainable by any preparation.

A Virginia slave named Thomas Sims escaped to Boston and was captured there. In spite of the most strenuous efforts of Garrison, Phillips, Edmund Quincy and other good men, a Massachusetts judge returned him to slavery.

This event brought forth two of Phillips's most celebrated orations; one when the judge's decision was made known, one upon its first anniversary — a daring thought to celebrate such an event! English literature has no passages more tremendous than those in which Wendell Phillips poured forth on these two occasions the liquid fire of his indignation, and in "The Sims Anniversary," particularly, that noble paragraph beginning "Take the broken hearts, the bereaved mothers," seems to me to represent the highest flight reached by this or any other orator of our race.

Here are some extracts from this great speech. They will indicate the unflinching courage of the man as well as the eloquence of the orator:

Thomas Sims is the first man that the city of Boston has openly bound and fettered and sent back to bondage. I have no heart to dwell on so horrible an outrage: that sad procession in the dim morning through our streets — the poor youth — his noble effort to break his chains — mocked with one short hour of freedom and then thrust back to the hell he had escaped, by brother men, in the prostituted names of justice and religion. We sit down with the single captive and weep with him as the iron enters into his soul — too sad for the moment to think of the disgrace of our city or even the wickedness of its rulers. Pity

swallows up indignation. We might be forgiven if for the moment we mistook our sadness for despair, and even fancied the event disastrous to others than the victim. But not so. Liberty knows nothing but victories. In a cause like ours to which every attribute of the most high is pledged, everything helps us. . . .

. . . . . .

I go further. I do not believe that if we should live to the longest period Providence ever allots to the life of a human being we shall see the total abolition of slavery, unless it comes in some critical conjunction of national affairs, when the slave, taking advantage of a crisis in the fate of his master, shall dictate his own terms. How did French slavery go down? How did the French slave trade go down? When Napoleon came back from Elba, when his fate hung trembling in the balance, and he wished to gather around him the sympathies of the liberals of Europe, he no sooner set foot in the Tuileries than he signed the edict abolishing the slave trade, against which the Abolitionists of England and France had protested for twenty years in vain. And the trade went down, because Napoleon felt that he must do something to gild the darkening hour of his second attempt to clutch the sceptre of France. How did the slave system go down? When, in 1848, the Provisional Government found itself in the Hôtel de Ville, obliged to do something to draw to itself the sympathy and liberal feeling of the French nation, they signed an edict — it was the first from the nascent Republic — abolishing the death penalty and slavery. The storm which rocked the vessel of state almost to foundering snapped forever the chain of the French slave. Look, too, at the his-

tory of Mexican and South American emancipation; you will find that it was, in every instance, I think, the child of convulsion.

The hour will come — God hasten it! — when the American people shall so stand on the deck of their Union, "built i' the eclipse and rigged with curses dark." If I live to see that hour I shall say to every slave, "Strike now for Freedom! The balance hangs trembling; it is uncertain which scale shall kick the beam. Strain every nerve, wrestle with every power God and nature have put into your hands, for your place among the races of this Western world"; and that hour would free the slave.

The Abolitionist who shall stand in such an hour as that and keep silence, will be recreant to the cause of three million of his fellow men in bonds. I believe that, probably, is the only way in which we shall ever, any of us, see the downfall of American slavery. I do not shrink from the toast with which Dr. Johnson flavored his Oxford port — "Success to the first insurrection of the blacks in Jamaica!" I do not shrink from the sentiment of Southey, in a letter to Duppa —"There are scenes of tremendous horror which I could smile at by Mercy's side. An insurrection which should make the Negroes masters of the West Indies is one." I believe both these sentiments are dictated by the highest humanity. I know what anarchy is. I know what civil war is. I can imagine the scenes of blood through which a rebellious slave population must march to their rights. They are dreadful. And yet I do not know that, to an enlightened man, a scene of civil war is any more sickening than the thought of a hundred and fifty years of slavery.

Take the broken hearts, the bereaved mothers, the infant wrung from the hands of its parents, the husband and wife torn asunder, every right trodden under foot, the blighted hopes, the imbruted souls, the darkened and degraded millions, sunk below the level of intellectual life, melted in sensuality, herded with beasts, who have walked over the burning marl of Southern slavery to their graves, and where is the battle-field, however ghastly, that is not white,— white as an angel's wing — compared with the blackness of that darkness which has brooded over the Carolinas for two hundred years? Do you love mercy? Weigh out the fifty thousand hearts that have beaten their last pulses amid agonies of thought and suffering fancy faints to think of, and the fifty thousand mothers, who, with sickening senses, watch for the footsteps that are not wont to tarry long in their coming, and soon find themselves left to tread the pathway of life alone — add all the horrors of cities sacked and lands laid waste — that is war. Weigh it now against some young, trembling girl sent to the auction block, some man like that taken from our courthouse and carried back into Georgia; multiply that individual agony into three millions; multiply that into centuries, and that into all the relations of father and child, husband and wife; heap on all the deep moral degradation both of oppressor and the oppressed — and tell me if Waterloo or Thermopylae can claim one tear from the eyes even of the tenderest spirit of mercy compared with this daily system of hell amid the most civilized Christian people on the face of the earth!

No, I confess, I am not a non-resistant. The reason why I advise the slave to be governed by a policy of peace is because he has no chance. If

he had one — if he had as good a chance as those who went up to Lexington seventy-seven years ago — I should call him the basest recreant that ever deserted wife and child if he did not vindicate his liberty by his own right hand.

Later in the same remarkable speech he recurred to this topic and expressed clearly his fundamental faith that there are conceivable conditions under which there is nothing left but violence.

You will say this is bloody doctrine — anarchical doctrine; it will prejudice people against the cause. I know it will. Heaven pardon those who make it necessary! Heaven pardon the judges, the merchants and the clergy who make it necessary for hunted men to turn when they are at bay, and fly at the necks of their pursuers! It is not our fault! I shrink from no question, however desperate, that has in it the kernel of possible safety for a human being, hunted by twenty millions of slave-catchers in this Christian republic of ours. I am willing to confess my faith. It is this, that the Christianity of this country is worth nothing, except it is or can be made capable of dealing with the question of slavery. I am willing to confess another article of my faith: that the constitution and government of this country is worth nothing, except it is or can be made capable of grappling with the great question of slavery.

## IV

## THE INTERESTS THEN AND THE INTERESTS NOW

The great strength of the real Abolitionists, of Phillips, Garrison and their followers, lay in the fact that they would never compromise.

This was all the more remarkable in a country where compromise is as natural and easy as dining. It may, in fact, be described as the national American vice; we all practice it. Except independence in 1776 and chattel slavery after 1863 we can hardly name a national issue that has been fought through to the end relentlessly. The good nature that is so charming at home and in some other places, and a bore when it induces us to submit with such unapproachable patience to strap-hanging in street cars and to extortion by railroads, is a nuisance when it gets into public affairs. A thing is either right or wrong. When it is an issue to be decided by public action the

favorite good natured American way is to try to make it both; which is not only impossible but imbecile.

It was so about chattel slavery previous to 1863 and it is so to-day about wage slavery.

As Garrison and Phillips and the rest steadily drove the national conscience before them on the slavery issue there arose a vast body of men that knew in their hearts and souls that slavery was wrong, but were too cowardly or too good natured to say so. These incessantly proposed compromises of different kinds with a doddering idea of staving off the inevitable conflict. They left behind an innumerable progeny industriously engaged to-day in the same endeavor. In the old days they said that of course things were not exactly as they ought to be but we must not talk about Abolition; the thing to do was to restrict slavery. Keep it out of the new territories but leave it alone in the South. How this would help the men and women then held in a terrible and degrading bondage, no one could say, but such was the platform of millions of men that must have known better. To-day their intellectual descendants, knowing equally well that basic conditions are wrong, dally similarly with feeble, footless proposals of reform. "Tell us not of

abolishing wage slavery," say these of little faith and less courage; "rather let us strive to better the condition of the slaves." So we have the social settlement, the playground association, the anti-child labor league, the tenement reform societies, and other gropings for betterment, while the system that manufactures every evil condition continues to work overtime and burden society with its poisonous products.

The laws passed by the Southern states making it a crime to teach a slave to read, with a few other civilized devices of that kind, including the ready shot gun, discouraged in Phillips's day some of the manifestation of this snivelling spirit of the uplift. The rest showed itself in a scheme to buy the slaves one at a time and deport them to Africa (a brilliant suggestion that was the foundation of the present republic of Liberia), and in some feeble protests against allowing slavery to engulf every corner of the land as well as to administer every part of the government. So exact is the parallel with present day conditions that someone should develop it to the end, merely as a historical study, if for no other reason. The perfect counterpart of the Progressive party of these days was the Free Soil party

of those, which figured in three successive presidential elections and once cast a very significant vote. That anyone should think it worth while to have free soil until we had free men seems now strange enough, but it was an idea extremely popular among certain orders of doughfaces in 1852. The avowed principles of the Free Soil party were not to abolish chattel slavery any more than the avowed principles of the Progressive party are to abolish wage slavery to-day; but merely to regulate the evil, a fact from which we can estimate the antiquity of the regulative school of political quackery.

With the Free Soil fake neither Phillips nor Garrison would have aught to do — which was well; otherwise slavery might have lasted much longer. The point with these two extremists and their followers was that on a matter of conscience there can be no compromise; it is either fight or surrender. They believed that slavery was a wrong for which all the words in all the tongues spoken by man could find no adequate expression. They were perfectly willing to die fighting it, but they would not for one instant admit that it was a thing to be "regulated."

To all the members of the Free Soil party, therefore, Phillips became an object of dislike

almost as much as he was to the truckling Whigs whom he so mercilessly lashed with his savage sarcasms. To them he was a wild and half-mad enthusiast, an eccentric, irrational fanatic, and above all, a detestable dealer in extravagances. That is the word in all ages beloved of the dough-face. Whatever he lacks the courage to do or say is "extravagance." Cowering far out of danger of even stray shots, he points to the man on the firing line and denounces him as extravagant. Why can't he keep cool as we do, here back of the sutlers' wagons and out of range? Slavery isn't half as bad as he paints it. I know many of the slave-holders and they are mighty nice fellows. He so exaggerates everything! And then he always appeals to the mob and the spirit of social unrest; he has none of the spirit of impartial inquiry; there is nothing nice and refined about his methods and nothing scholarly. Having transacted all of which they would betake themselves to the passing of innocuous resolutions and the choosing of candidates for the best offices.

But Phillips knew well enough that the greatest and only eventual force in the world is the power of a moral idea and that it was lost the instant it fell to lasciviating with a compro-

mise. He knew that, however men might be swerved and seemingly obsessed by the madness of much profits, at bottom the masses were moral and the way to abolish any evil was to appeal to their consciences about it. They would not respond to the first appeal nor to the tenth, perhaps, but in the end the response was inevitable if only those that were banded against the evil were steadfast and implacable, caring nothing about weapons but fighting always.

This is another respect in which he was the greatest figure of his times, that he saw all this so plainly while what were called the best minds never seemed to suspect a truth so great and vital. While they fooled and fiddled about, wasting time in deeds analogous to the trust busting and regulative fol-de-rol of our own times, he kept incessantly repeating his simple talisman, "This thing is wrong, it is absolutely wrong, it is utterly wrong!" and lo, at last the walls fell and the evil vanished.

But he did this at a cost to himself, and he knew it, and knew it would be so from the beginning, and no man ever heard him complain about it. Therefore, I hail him as the greatest American, because he put service above all other considerations and then stood unshakable

in that creed. If you are as sick as I am of having the galumphing military heroes and the faking augurs of statecraft crammed down your throat, come and consider for a time a real man and have refreshing for your soul.

Next to the national appetite for compromise, the deadest weights on social progress in America are the timidity of its champions and their failure to grasp the simple little fact that what they are enlisted in is not an afternoon tea party but a war. In war you must take blows as well as give them. But we seem to think that we can deal with a situation as terrific as now confronts modern society and still keep on good terms with the bandit beneficiaries of that system we are trying to dispossess.

For instance, we have always had an almost superstitious terror for the printed word if it appears in a newspaper, and we have never been able to understand that a large part of our press is controlled absolutely by the powers of evil that keep it; consequently its hostility to men or measures is without real significance. To be abused by the newspapers that in former days were kept by the slave owning power was a badge of honor equalled only by abuse from the newspapers that in our own time are kept by the gatherers of huge profits and the culti-

vators of the financial melon patch. Nothing that such journals can say of an honest man can harm him, unless by some misfortune they should say good of him. In that case he should utilize the comment for the narrow observation of his walk and ways, for assuredly he has been doing something he should not do.

All this is perfectly obvious to anybody that will take the time to consider carefully concerning newspapers and the sources of their opinions; but the average man still continues to allow himself to be affected by press attacks and the average leader to fear adverse comment.

Mr. Phillips had none of these delusions. He had learned the first great lesson every reformer must learn if he is to be of the slightest effect with his reforms. He had learned to disregard criticism. He knew well enough that the beneficiaries of the system of 35 per cent. profits on slave labor would not yield without a struggle the fatness of their pleasant arrangements, and he knew that their power would be sufficient to array against their assailants a wide variety of influences. He knew too that one of the favorite weapons of reaction is to attack the methods of those that strive for progress. He understood all this and estimated it

at its true value. One of the things for which we owe him undying gratitude is that he never hesitated for a moment to speak the plain, unvarnished truth about any situation and never cared what lies were set afloat about him the next day by the kept press of that period. His views on this subject were so clear that I think they ought to be remembered by every person interested in securing better conditions. In his great lecture on Daniel O'Connell, one of his most eloquent utterances, he said this:

O'Connell has been charged with coarse, violent, and intemperate language. The criticism is of little importance. Stupor and palsy never understand life. White-livered indifference is always disgusted and annoyed by earnest conviction. Protestants criticised Luther in the same way. It took three centuries to carry us far off enough to appreciate his colossal proportions. It is a hundred years to-day since O'Connell was born. It will take another hundred to put us at such an angle as will enable us correctly to measure his stature. Premising that it would be folly to find fault with a man struggling for life because his attitudes were ungraceful, remembering the Scythian king's answer to Alexander, criticising his strange weapon,—"If you knew how precious freedom was, you would defend it even with axes,"—we must see that O'Connell's own explanation is evidently sincere and true. He found the Irish heart so cowed, and Englishmen so arrogant, that he saw it needed an independence verging on inso-

lence, a defiance that touched extremest limits, to breathe self-respect into his own race, teach the aggressor manners, and sober him into respectful attention. It was the same with us Abolitionists. Webster had taught the North the 'bated breath and crouching of a slave. It needed with us an attitude of independence that was almost insolent, it needed that we should exhaust even the Saxon vocabulary of scorn, to fitly utter the righteous and haughty contempt that honest men had for man-stealers. Only in that way could we wake the North to self-respect, or teach the South that at length she had met her equal, if not her master. On a broad canvas, meant for the public square, the tiny lines of a Dutch interior would be invisible. In no other circumstances was the French maxim, "You can never make a revolution with rose-water," more profoundly true. The world has hardly yet learned how deep a philosophy lies hid in Hamlet's,—

> "Nay, and thou'lt mouth,
> I'll rant as well as thou."

From the very beginning of his career he saw that whoever stopped to pay heed to criticism would never get anywhere. To his mind the only important thing was that a man should strike at wrong and injustice with whatsoever weapon he could command and care naught what might be said of the posture of his blows. Unless he did his best without compromise and without counting the cost to himself he could never be on good terms with that conscience that

to Phillips was the strongest and highest of human influences. He said something like this far back in the early days of his anti-slavery enlistment, on that occasion when he shocked and dismayed the placid town of Concord:

I do not care for criticisms upon my manner of assailing slavery. In a struggle for life it is hardly fair for men who are lolling at ease to remark that the limbs of the combatants are not arranged in classic postures. I agree with the last speaker that this is a serious subject; had it been otherwise I should not devote my life to it. Stripling as I am, I but echo the voice of the ages, of our venerable forefathers — of statesmen, poets, philosophers. The gentleman has painted the dangers to life, liberty, and happiness that would be the consequence of doing right. These dangers now exist by law at the South. Liberty may be bought at too dear a price; if I cannot have it except by sin, I reject it. But I cannot so blaspheme God as to doubt my safety in obeying Him. The sanctions of English law are with me; but if I tread the dust of law beneath my feet and enter the Holy of Holies, what do I find written there? "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped to thee; he shall dwell with you, even among you." I throw myself then on the bosom of Infinite Wisdom. Even the heathen will tell you, "Let justice be done though the heavens fall"; and the old reformer answered when warned against the danger of going to Rome, "It is *not* necessary that I should live; it *is* necessary that I go to Rome." But now our pulpits are silent — whoever heard this sub-

ject presented until it was done by "silly women" and "striplings"? The first speaker accused me of ambition; let me tell him that ambition chooses a smoother path to fame. And to you, my young friends, who have been cautioned against exciting topics and advised to fold your hands in selfish ease, I would say, Not so — throw yourselves upon the altar of some noble cause! To rise in the morning only to eat and drink, and gather gold — that is a life not worth living. Enthusiasm is the life of the soul.

The difference between the time-serving, timid souled, American Congressman and the men that are real factors in progress he once described in an article in the *Liberator*, and the description is as good to-day as it was when it was written. If we substitute the present struggle against wage slavery for the struggle against chattel slavery that was uppermost in Phillips's mind when he wrote this comparison, no observer of these times will note any difference. He said:

The reformer is careless of numbers, disregards popularity, and deals only with ideas, conscience, and common-sense. He feels, with Copernicus, that as God waited long for an interpreter, so he can wait for his followers. He neither expects nor is over-anxious for immediate success. The politician dwells in an everlasting *Now*. His motto is "Success"— his aim, votes. His object is not absolute right, but, like Solon's laws, as much right as the people will sanction. His office is,

not to instruct public opinion, but to represent it. Thus, in England, Cobden, the reformer, created sentiment, and Peel, the politician, stereotyped it into statutes.

This very idea of the power of determined men, however few, in a cause of righteousness he expressed far better than any of us could attempt to express it in an address he made in April, 1872, before the International Grand Lodge of the Knights of St. Crispin. The shoemakers' trade union used to bear this name, so it appears that in nomenclature, anyway, we have made some progress. Mr. Phillips said:

I am told that you represent from 70,000 to 100,000 men, here and elsewhere. Think of it! One hundred thousand men! They can dictate the fate of this nation. Give me fifty thousand men in earnest, who can agree on all vital questions, who will plant their shoulders together, and swear by all that is true and just that for the long years they will put their great idea before the country, and those 50,000 men will govern the nation. So if I have 100,000 men represented before me, who are in earnest, who get hold of the great question of labor, and having hold of it, grapple with it, and rip it and tear it open, and invest it with light, gathering the facts, piercing the brains about them and crowding those brains with the facts — then I know, sure as fate, though I may not live to see it, that they will certainly conquer this nation in twenty years. It is impossible that they should not. And that is your power, gentlemen.

And again he saw always this great truth that entrenched privilege is not to be dislodged by passing resolutions and devising polite measures of reform, but by sheer, brutal, straight-out fighting; and he saw that the very uncouthness of the weapons of progress against which lady-like and perfumed reformers were always objecting was in itself a product of the conditions it combated. Thus to workingmen he said once:

I know labor is narrow; I know she is aggressive; I know she arms herself with the best weapons that a corrupt civilization furnishes — all true. Where do we get these ideas? Borrowed them from capital, every one of them; and when you advance to us on the level of peace, unarmed, we'll meet you on the same. While you combine and plot and defend, so will we.

But Mr. Johnson says, "Come into the world with the white banner of peace." Ay, we will, when you disarm. . . . Labor comes up and says, "They have shotted their cannon to the lips; they have rough ground their swords as in battle; they have adopted every new method; they have invented every dangerous machine — and it is all planted like a great park of artillery against us. They have incorporated wealth; they have hidden behind banks; they have concealed themselves behind currency; they have sheltered themselves in taxation; they have passed rules to govern us — and we will improve upon the lesson they have taught us. When they disarm, we will — not before!"

## V

## STRIPPING OFF THE MASKS

From 1840 to 1859 the whole anti-slavery cause seemed to move in immitigable gloom. Most of its advocates, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, had no hope that in their time they should see chattel slavery overthrown. While the Abolitionists were divided and quarreling about woman suffrage and political action, the united slave-holding interests swept from victory to victory, increasing every year their hold upon the nation. They dominated all branches of the government, most of the courts, both of the great parties. Between the Whigs and the Democrats of that day was only this difference, that the Democrats went a little further in abject servility to the Interests — an achievement by no means easy and due to superior ability, not to surpassing desire.

Yet all this time events and conditions were at work unseen, shaping the nation's course to

the will of the Abolitionists. Beyond their knowledge, beyond their dreaming, every important event was reinforcing their appeals to the conscience of the nation.

The great intellectual idol of the North and most conspicuous Whig was Daniel Webster, then a Senator from Massachusetts. Two generations of American school children have been reared to reverence this man, though it would puzzle any impartial observer to say why. There was not one thing in his career that could appeal to a reflective person as worthy of admiration. He was, to be sure, of extraordinary appearance, having deep, shaggy, overhanging brows, a ponderous head and deep-set eyes of a remarkable brilliancy, and it must be on his looks alone that his fame is founded. He was for many years the oratorical model of the country and yet an analysis of his speeches, if anyone to-day should make such a study, would show chiefly a tawdry and an over-ornamented rhetoric. He held high places but his public papers never revealed any conception of public duty beyond a cheap sort of patriotism. His "Reply to Haynes" has been declaimed by a million school boys, and yet, stripped of the halo of artificial glory that surrounds it, is but sorry stuff. In all his career he never devel-

oped one idea of social service, never said one word for the human cause, never furthered one aim except his own advancement; and yet for some reason the North was possessed of an irrational frenzy about him. For many years he had cherished the common and fatal ambition of the American statesman. He wished to be President, and this ambition now served in a singular way to bring about the sharper clash between slave Interests and freemen that was needed at this juncture to revive the Abolition cause.

In 1850, the 348,214 slave-owners, being made drunk with power, introduced in Congress a fugitive slave law far more drastic and tyrannical than had ever before been conceived. It not only transformed all government officers, including postmasters and deputy marshals, into slave-catchers, but provided a special set of slave-catching commissioners, punished citizens that hindered captures or helped escapes, and rewarded those that returned a slave.

When this astounding measure reached the Senate, all men turned to Webster to see what he would do. Millions of men that liked not Abolition heaved the gorge at being impressed as man-catchers. These hoped Webster would attack the bill. In the midst of a tense and

dramatic scene in the Senate chamber, March 7, 1850, while even his adversaries seemed sorry to see his humiliation, Webster sold himself for the chance of the Presidency. He supported the entire measure.

Against this wallowing in shame the masses of the people at the North mentally revolted. The official and social North congratulated the man on his abject groveling, but "Ichabod," Whittier's greatest poem, struck the real note of popular thought and launched at the truckler the scorn he had earned:

"So lost! So fallen! The light withdrawn
That once he bore;
The glory of his gray hairs gone
Forever more!"

Revile him not,— the tempter hath
A snare for all;
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,
Befit his fall!

O, dumb be passion's stormy rage
When he who might
Have lighted up and led his age
Falls back in night.

Scorn! Would the angels laugh to mark
A bright soul driven,
Fiend goaded, down the endless dark,
From hope and heaven!

Let not the land once proud of him
Insult him now
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,
Dishonored brow.

But let its humbled sons instead
From sea to lake,
A long lament, as for the dead,
In sadness make.

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains,—
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled:
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!

Then pay the reverence of old days
To his dead fame;
Walk backward with reverted gaze
And hide the shame!

"The man is dead!" the poet said. He was so, indeed, though few realized the fact. To Phillips, who had long distrusted and despised Webster, the event merely confirmed an old judgment. After his custom he used it as a text for the lessons he desired to enforce. At a Faneuil Hall meeting, called to denounce the Fugitive Slave law, he spoke in his most impressive style. Later he returned to the sub-

ject in his Fraternity lecture called "Idols," delivered in Boston on October 4, 1859, so merciless and still so moving that it leaves the reader almost breathless. It contains that famous excoriation of Rufus Choate still declaimed by school boys.

Since revolutionary days no other man in Massachusetts had been held in such popular regard as Webster, while Rufus Choate was the leader of the Massachusetts bar and mentioned with reverence by the ordinary citizen. To attack these two men was a bold undertaking; it was flying in the face of that accepted public opinion that Phillips himself described as the tyrant of the republic. Yet he knew perfectly well upon what flimsy grounds such opinion existed and he knew, too, that in these cases the esteem in which the men was held was without just warrant, since neither had ever done one thing for that cause of man that alone is of any importance in this world. Therefore in "Idols" he spared not. Webster's statue had recently been ordered to be placed in the State House. That was the occasion for the present oration and the explanation of its title. Here is one extract:

The honors we grant mark how high we stand and they educate the future. The men we honor

and the maxims we lay down in measuring our favorites show the levels and morals of the time. Two men have been in every one's mouth of late and men have exhausted themselves trying to pay their admiration and their respect. The courts have covered the grave of Mr. Choate with eulogy. We are told that "he worked hard," "he never neglected his client," "he flung over the discussions of the forum the grace of a rare scholarship," "no pressure or emergency ever stirred him to an unkind word." A ripe scholar, a profound lawyer, a faithful servant of his client, a gentleman. This is a good record, surely. May he sleep in peace! What he earned, God grant he may have! But the bar that seeks to claim for such a one a place among great jurists must itself be weak indeed; for this is only to make him out the one-eyed monarch of the blind. Not one high-moral trait specified; not one patriotic act mentioned; not one patriotic service claimed. Look at Mr. Webster's idea of what a lawyer should be in order to be called great, in the sketch he drew of Jeremiah Mason, and notice what stress he lays on the religious and moral elevation, and the glorious and high purposes which crowned his life! Nothing of this now! I forget. Mr. Hallett did testify for Mr. Choate's religion. But the law maxim is that a witness should be trusted only in matters he understands, and the evidence therefore amounts to nothing. Incessant eulogy; but not a word of one effort to lift the yoke of cruel or unequal legislation from the neck of its victims; not one attempt to make the code of his country wiser, purer, better; not one effort to bless his times or breathe a higher moral purpose into the community; not one blow struck for right

or for liberty while the battle of the giants was going on about him; not one patriotic act to stir the hearts of his idolators; not one public act of any kind whatever about whose merit friend or foe could even quarrel, unless when he scouted our great charter as a "glittering generality," or jeered at the philanthropy which tried to practise the Sermon on the Mount. When Cordus, the Roman senator, whom Tiberius murdered, was addressing his fellows he began: "Fathers, they accuse me of illegal words; plain proof that there are no illegal deeds with which to charge me." So with these eulogies — words, nothing but words; plain proof there were no deeds to praise.

His final flaying of Choate will probably endure so long as anything in oratorical literature endures:

Yet this is the model which Massachusetts offers to the Pantheon of the great jurists of the world!

Suppose we stood in that lofty temple of jurisprudence,— on either side of us the statues of the great lawyers of every age and clime,— and let us see what part New England — Puritan, educated, free New England — would bear in the pageant. Rome points to a colossal figure, and says, "That is Papinian, who, when the Emperor Caracalla murdered his own brother, and ordered the lawyer to defend the deed, went cheerfully to death, rather than sully his lips with the atrocious plea; and that is Ulpian, who, aiding his prince to put the army below the law, was massacred at the foot of a weak, but virtuous throne."

And France stretches forth her grateful hands, crying, "That is D'Aguesseau, worthy, when he

went to face an enraged king, of the farewell his wife addressed him —'Go! forget that you have a wife and children to ruin, and remember only that you have France to save.'"

England says, "That is Coke, who flung the laurels of eighty years in the face of the first Stuart, in defence of the people. This is Selden, on every book of whose library you saw written the motto of which he lived worthy, 'Before everything, Liberty!' That is Mansfield, silver-tongued, who proclaimed,

"'Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free.'

"This is Romilly, who spent life trying to make law synonymous with justice, and succeeded in making life and property safer in every city of the empire. And that is Erskine, whose eloquence, spite of Lord Eldon and George III, made it safe to speak and to print."

Then New England shouts, "This is Choate, who made it safe to murder; and of whose health thieves asked before they began to steal."

Of Webster, Phillips said:

No man criticises when private friendship moulds the loved form in

"Stone that breathes and struggles,
Or brass that seems to speak."

Let Mr. Webster's friends crowd their own halls and grounds with his bust and statues. That is no concern of ours. But when they ask the State to join in doing him honor, then we claim the right to express an opinion. . . . We cannot but remem-

ber that the character of the commonwealth is shown by the character of those it crowns. A brave old Englishman tells us the Greeks had officers who did pluck down statues if they exceeded due symmetry and proportion. "We need such now," he adds, "to order monuments according to men's merits." Indeed we do! When I think of the long term and wide reach of his influence, and look at the subjects of his speeches,— the mere shells of history, drum-and-trumpet declamation, dry law, or selfish bickerings about trade,— when I think of his bartering the hopes of four millions of bondmen for the chances of his private ambition, I recall the criticism on Lord Eldon,—"No man ever did his race so much good as Eldon prevented." Again, when I remember the close of his life spent in ridiculing the Anti-Slavery movement as useless abstraction, moonshine, "mere rub-a-dub agitation," because it did not minister to trade and gain, methinks I seem to see written all over his statue Tocqueville's conclusion from his survey of French and American democracy,— "The man who seeks freedom for anything but freedom's self, is made to be a slave!"

Edward Everett, who was to the slave-holding Interests of his day such a facile and knee-crooking valet as many a United States Senator has been to the profit-gouging Interests of our times, had delivered on Webster one of those eulogies that produce mental nausea in every healthy reader. Mr. Phillips deals with Everett too, according to his deserts:

Blame me not that I again open the record, Mr. Chairman. His injudicious friends will not let him die. Indeed, the heavy yoke he laid on innocent and friendless victims frets and curses them yet too keenly to allow him to be forgotten. He reaps only what he sowed. In the Talmud the Jews have a story that Og, King of Bashan, lifted once a great rock to hurl it on the armies of Judah. God hollowed it in the middle, letting it slip over the giant's neck, there to rest while he lived. This man lifted the Fugitive Slave Bill to hurl it, as at Syracuse, on the trembling and hunted slave, and God has hung it like a mill-stone about his neck for evermore. While the echoes of Everett's periods still lingered in our streets, as I stood with the fresh printed sheet of his eulogy in my hand, there came to me a man, successful after eight attempts in flying from bondage. Week after week he had been in the woods, half-starved, seeking in vain a shelter. For months he had pined in dungeons, waiting the sullen steps of his master. At last God blessed the eighth effort and he stood in Boston on his glad way from the vulture of the States to the safe refuge of English law. He showed me his broad bosom scarred all over with the branding iron, his back one mass of records how often the lash had tortured him for his noble efforts to get free. As I looked at him the empty and lying eulogy dropped from my nerveless hand and I thanked God that statue and eulogy both were only a horrid nightmare and that there were still roofs in Boston, safe shelter for these heroic children of God's right hand!

The impression created by Webster's bargain and the bill he supported did not wear off; they

were of the order of things that men do not easily forget. Slowly the people began to awaken to the true nature of the power that had subverted the Republic. The South, disdaining Webster's sacrifice, contemptuously refused him the mess of pottage for which he had bartered his soul. Disappointment and the signs of popular disgust shortened his life. President Fillmore rewarded him by making him Secretary of State, but he died in two years, and his place in the Senate was filled by Charles Sumner, who from the same platform in Faneuil Hall with Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass, the Negro, had denounced Webster for his surrender. Massachusetts had taken the first forward step.

Upon every phase of these developments Phillips kept watch, seeking to turn each to the advantage of his cause. The most singular thing is that in all the darkest days of the movement there is not in his speeches nor letters nor recorded comments one note of discouragement. He seems to tower above average men, seeing over their heads to the end of the road. To him the failure of Abolition was unthinkable. If men turned traitor or ceased from the fight, so much the worse for them. When the North cringed, Phillips jeered in its face. When the

South threatened to secede, he cried, "Let it go!" Nothing could take him by surprise or find him unprepared. When audiences hissed and threatened to lynch him, he flung back their taunts and turned their ridicule upon themselves. He never flinched, never hesitated, never modified his expressions, never made a concession to hostile public sentiment, never lost a chance to strike a blow, and was altogether the most indomitable, irrepressible, and insistent fighter in history.

At Cincinnati once in these days he was to lecture before an audience, nine-tenths of which would have been delighted to see him hanged. He knew perfectly well what he faced, but with unruffled composure he walked down the stage and stood waiting for silence. When it came he held up a single sheet of paper. All eyes were now fixed upon him; all men sat breathlessly watching. "If this sheet of paper," began Mr. Phillips in his dulcet tones, "were the Constitution of the United States and I thought it permanently protected the infamy of slaveholding, I would tear it into pieces like this," and he tore the paper into fragments and flung them at his feet. With snarls and howls men rushed over the foot-lights to seize him. Be-

fore they could reach him, friends from behind had grasped him in their arms, hurled him into a carriage at the stage door and whipped him away to safety.

Again in Cincinnati some years later, a man brought to the hall a bottle of vitriol intending to throw it in Mr. Phillips's face. A great paving stone was pitched at him from a gallery box and crashed into the stage at his feet. Often men came to his meetings with ropes in their pockets to hang him.

And yet under the surface of things apparently so untoward the seed sown by the Abolitionists was bearing unsuspected fruit. Garrison, Phillips and the others like them touched the consciences of men; therein lay their power. Every day the Abolitionist band, so led and inspired, grew in numbers and activity. Slowly righteous men regained their courage as they gazed upon leaders that were without fear. Among such men, as a compensation for his usual experiences Phillips found sometimes a strength of love that must have warmed his heart, and even among the indifferent or the hostile was often an admission of his unmatched oratory. As illustrating this and also his power to interest and to please I may

mention the fact, unique, I think, in the history of the American platform, that on one visit to Cortland, New York, he was called upon to deliver four lectures in twenty-six hours.

## VI

## JOHN BROWN AND HARPER'S FERRY

But to return to the events that swung the nation behind the Abolitionists. Two years after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law came "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which focussed the country's attention upon the essential immorality of slavery. The same year the Whigs were annihilated in the Presidential election and thoughtful men perceived that a new party, based upon stronger opposition to the slave Interests, was inevitable. Yet those Interests continued to walk their wild road whither that led. In 1854 they passed the Kansas and Nebraska bill, repealing the Missouri Compromise and opening all the Territories to the advance of slavery. In the same year they secured the arrest and indictment of Mr. Phillips and Theodore Parker for obstructing the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. On May 22, 1856, Preston S. Brooks, a Representative from South Carolina,

stole into the Senate Chamber, crept behind Charles Sumner as he sat at his desk writing, and beat him almost to death with a heavy cane — for the sake of the cause of Profits. The same year the Republican party was launched with John C. Fremont as its President on a platform frankly inimical to the slave oligarchy and cast an ominously large vote. In 1857 the Supreme Court, controlled by the Interests, handed down the Dred Scott decision, and Chief Justice Taney therein advanced the doctrine that "the black man has no rights that the white man is bound to respect." Extraordinary are the potentialities of a phrase! To the aroused conscience of the country, steadily addressed by the Abolitionists, this phrase struck home with peculiar force. It was something concrete and easily understandable; something also that seemed to embody in a few words the whole spirit of the slave-holding Interests. Men that had no strong aversion to slavery and detested the Abolitionists rejected the idea that a Negro was something less than a horse or a dog and began belatedly to perceive the irrepressible struggle.

The passage of the Kansas and Nebraska bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise were followed by civil war in Kansas. The

question of slavery or freedom being left to the people of that Territory, the slave Interests determined to win it for slavery. To that end they poured their adherents into Kansas, seized the Territorial government, stuffed the ballot-boxes, dispossessed the officers that had been legally elected, and began everywhere to drive out the anti-slavery element. In response Free Soil champions preached a new crusade that was assumed by thousands; the contending forces met in desperate struggles that made Kansas truly a dark and bloody ground: and at last there appeared on the scene the commanding figure of John Brown.

We have no need to follow here all the developments of the story. When Kansas had been made a Free State, Brown returned to the East and began to meditate the enterprise that culminated in Harper's Ferry. For their own good reasons, doubtless, reactionary writers like John Hay and Theodore Roosevelt have described this as an insane freak and Brown himself as a half-mad fanatic. They overlook the fact that Brown explained his plans and ideas in the utmost detail to some of the ablest Abolitionist leaders, and that cool-headed men like Parker and Frank Sanborn, and men of peace like Gerrit Smith, gave him their complete sup-

port. His project failed, to be sure, and Brown was hanged. Immediate success is the only test the reactionary mind can apply to anything. Brown made an armed movement into the South; he was captured and hanged. Therefore he was a madman. Minds of this order cannot grasp the ideals of a man that felt he would rather die protesting than live in a State whose constitution sanctioned human slavery. Elsewhere, liberty-lovers easily understood. To France, for instance, John Brown became one of the world heroes. "That ends slavery in America!" said Victor Hugo, when he heard of Brown's hanging. Few in America saw the truth so clearly.

From all these developments Mr. Phillips pointed anew his familiar insistence that until slavery were abolished there could be neither peace, security nor national righteousness. As he had protested vehemently against the Mexican war, calling it a wicked device to enlarge the slave territory, so in successive speeches he entered separate protests against the Kansas and Nebraska bill, against the assault upon Sumner and the applause that greeted the assault, against the Dred Scott decision, against the attempt to seize Kansas

for slavery, against the trial of John Brown, and now against his hanging.

This was one of his historic utterances. It was delivered in Henry Ward Beecher's Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. To speak as Phillips spoke then required a high order of moral courage. The cherished hope of the slaveholders was that they could implicate Phillips in Brown's plot, have him indicted as accessory, and thus get him into slave-holding territory where he could be hanged. His house was watched, he was dogged by detectives and there was a likelihood that his papers would be seized and examined. Entirely undismayed by all these conditions, Mr. Phillips openly avowed his complete sympathy with Brown's attempt.

People do me the honor to say, in some of the Western papers, that this is traceable to some teachings of mine. It is too much honor to such as me. Gladly, if it were not fulsome vanity, would I clutch this laurel of having any share in the great resolute daring of that man who flung himself against an empire in behalf of justice and liberty. They were not the bravest men who fought at Saratoga and Yorktown in the war of 1776. O no! It was rather those who flung themselves at Lexington, few and feeble, against the embattled ranks of an empire, till then thought irresistible. . . .

"Commonwealth of Virginia!" There is no

such thing. Lawless, brutal force is no basis of a government, in the true sense of that word. No civil society, no government, can exist except on the basis of the willing submission of all its citizens and by the performance of the duty of rendering equal justice between man and man.

Whatever calls itself a government, and refuses that duty, or has not that assent, is no government. It is only a pirate ship. Virginia — the Commonwealth of Virginia! She is only a chronic insurrection. I mean exactly what I say. I am weighing my words now. She is a pirate ship and John Brown sails the sea, a lord high admiral of the Almighty with his commission to sink every pirate he meets on God's ocean of the Nineteenth Century. I mean literally and exactly what I say. In God's world there are no majorities, no minorities; one on God's side is a majority. . . . John Brown has twice as much right to hang Governor Wise as Governor Wise has to hang him. . . .

But John Brown violated the law. Yes. On yonder desk lie the inspired words of men who died violent deaths for breaking the laws of Rome. Why do you listen to them so reverently? Huss and Wickliffe violated laws; why honor them? George Washington, had he been caught before 1783, would have died on the gibbet for breaking the laws of his sovereign. Yet I have heard that man praised within six months. Yes, you say, but these men broke bad laws. Just so. It is honorable, then, to break bad laws and such law-breaking history loves and God blesses! Who says, then, that slave-laws are not ten thousand times worse than any these men resisted? Whatever argument excuses them makes John Brown a saint.

The next day after that portentous tragedy at Charlestown he went to New York and accompanied the body to North Elba, Brown's old home, where it was to be buried. It was he that pronounced the funeral oration, most moving of all his addresses, most moving of all memorial addresses in the language. Its closing words will live in the memory of every person that ever read them, when after reviewing Brown's heroism and sacrifice he said:

> God make us all worthier of him whose dust we lay among these hills he loved. Here he girded himself and went forth to battle. Fuller success than his heart ever dreamed God granted him. He sleeps in the blessings of the crushed and the poor, and men believe more firmly in virtue now that such a man has lived. Standing here, let us thank God for a firmer faith and fuller hope.

The next year, 1860, saw the prearranged division of the Democratic party, the election of Lincoln and the birth of the Southern Confederacy. At first Mr. Phillips thought that to allow the seceding States to depart would be better than to try to detain them with force. Their absence would at least clear from what was left of the Union the stain of slavery, and he believed it would in time work out the death of the institution even in the South itself. Most persons at the North, frightened at

the prospect, favored every concession that would induce the Southern States to remain. In Massachusetts a very strong movement was under way to repeal the Personal Liberty Act, of which Mr. Phillips was one of the authors, because it had given offense to the slave Interests. At Washington a bill, supported if not actually drawn by Lincoln himself, was introduced to prohibit any agitation of the question of slavery.

On December 2, 1860, Phillips was announced to speak in Tremont Temple against slavery. The Interests induced the mayor to close the hall against him. Phillips repaired to the colored people's church in Belknap Street, and delivered his address there. The rioters attempted to seize him but his friends hurried him out of the rear entrance toward his home. Before he reached Essex Street the mob had discovered him and poured across the Common in pursuit. A bodyguard of young men protected him, marching in a circle with locked arms about him until he reached his house.

Theodore Parker, the Abolitionist preacher of Boston, was now dead and Mr. Phillips sometimes supplied his pulpit. Two weeks after the Belknap Street riot Mr. Phillips delivered an-

other anti-slavery speech in Parker's pulpit. Again the mob was there, attempting first to break up the meeting and then to lynch the speaker, and again he was protected to his home by his volunteer body guard. I take pleasure in noting that this was composed of German Turners. The Turn Verein had heard of the attempt to throttle free speech and had resolved to defend its champion, and for weeks members of the Verein mounted guard day and night over the Phillips house.

On January 20, he spoke again from Parker's pulpit and the previous scenes were repeated, except that the mob was larger, more determined and more blood-thirsty. It was necessary for the police, who had hitherto been held off by the pro-slavery mayor, to assist the Turners, and one of the policemen subsequently testified to the difficulty with which Mr. Phillips's life was saved.

Yet on each of these occasions he appeared to be above fear, spoke with all of his old time fire and effectiveness, and declared his position unequivocally. On February 17, he spoke again from Parker's pulpit on "Progress" and again a phalanx of friends of free speech must be drawn about him as a bulwark. But as he spoke on, men that had come resolved to hang

him listened to his words, launched in that marvelous voice; gradually they forgot their passions; at last conquered in spite of their prejudices, they joined with the rest of the audience in tumultuous applause.

The war came, and in the presence of the national crisis Mr. Phillips resumed his duties as an American citizen, fervently supported the Union, and used his eloquence to further enlistments and to encourage the nation in those trying hours. He did not like Lincoln and did not trust him, believing him to be a politician and an opportunist without convictions against slavery. He was repelled by Lincoln's declaration that he would save the Union with slavery if he could and without slavery if he must; by his endorsement of the Fugitive Slave Law and attempts to enforce it in the first part of the war; by the long postponement of emancipation, and by the earlier conduct of the war upon reasons of political tactics. On these matters he freely criticized the administration while he supported it. But when Abraham Lincoln was assassinated the most eloquent tribute to his good qualities came from the lips of Wendell Phillips in the memorial address of April 23, 1865, delivered at Tremont Temple. "These are sober days," began Mr. Phillips. "The judgments

of God have found us out," and he proceeded to show that the barbarism of slavery had echoed in the barbarism of assassination, and in this way we were paying our penalty for our long indifference to a national sin. "And what of him," he said, "in whose precious blood this momentous lesson is writ? He sleeps in the blessings of the poor, whose fetters God commissioned him to break."

The terrible event turned the joy of the Abolitionists to mourning. Yet their thirty years' war had ended in triumph; their cause was won. Five days before Lincoln fell, the flag had been restored upon Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, against which the first shot of the Rebellion had been fired. A distinguished company of public men attended the ceremony; Henry Ward Beecher was the orator of the day, Henry Wilson, Judge Holt and George Thompson of England were there. So was one other man. Thirty years before, he had been dragged through the streets of Boston to be hanged for preaching the abolition of slavery; now with slavery abolished he stood the nation's honored guest at the ceremonies that marked the end of the long struggle. What must have been the emotions that day of William Lloyd Garrison!

And yet the satisfaction that belongs to these thoughts is dimmed, it must be admitted, in anyone that stops to consider the present state of the people that with such a staggering expenditure of blood and treasure were set free.

Chattel slavery was abolished; the deadly clutch of 35 per cent. profit was taken from the throats of the colored race; but the day of justice and reparation for which Phillips and Garrison labored is still put afar off by surviving feudalism and surviving savagery. If the men that at such risk of life and with such sacrifices agitated for freedom could return now to see the extent to which their work has been nullified in the South they might question whether much of it had not been in vain. Certainly a condition in which Americans of dark complexion are denied because of that complexion the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, the protection of the laws, the ordinary operations of justice, the place of citizens, the commonest considerations of humanity, is a condition of which the old self-sacrificing Abolitionists never dreamed and no thoughtful American at the close of the war would have thought possible. Who, for instance, would have thought that in seven states of the Union the Constitution would be openly

abolished to gratify a mere racial prejudice or that we should ever see a condition of helotage legally established for millions of our fellow Americans? Who would have thought that such things could be done without a protest from the regions that produced the Garrisons, Phillipses, Browns, Gerrit Smiths, Stevenses and the rest that thundered against the other kind of slavery? And who can reflect upon these conditions and avoid the thought that there is as urgent need now of a Phillips and a Garrison as there was in 1833?

What Wendell Phillips would have thought, for instance, of the "Jim Crow car," that hideous disgrace to our civilization, we know well enough from the testimony of Frederick Douglass. Before the war the steamboats on Long Island Sound and elsewhere in the North would not allow a colored person to travel otherwise than as a "deck" or steerage passenger, which is to say that colored persons were not allowed a place to sleep. Phillips knew this and whenever he was on the same boat with Douglass he would leave his own cabin and spend the night on the forward deck with the great colored man, walking to and fro in conversation. He felt that so long as such savage regulations existed he had no right to

a greater luxury than was allowed to his brother of darker skin.

We may know well enough, therefore, that if the life of Mr. Phillips had been prolonged, neither the barbarous "Jim Crow" laws nor the laws that nullify the Constitution and deprive the colored American of his rights would have been passed without at least one vehement protest.

It is certain, too, that he would have realized the true underlying causes for a condition in which 10,000,000 people are the victims of such wrong and injustice. He would have seen that aside from the natural snobbishness of a certain American element and the rancors left by the war, the true origin of these persecutions was solely economic. He would have seen that the hatred felt at the South against the Negro was like the hatred once felt in California against the Chinese and sprang from the same poisonous competitive system that is the origin of nine-tenths of the ills of society. Colored laborers were in competition with white laborers; under the existing system all laborers are harassed with the idea that there is not enough work for all. In such conditions every dollar earned by a colored man was deemed a dollar taken from a white man.

Therefore the white laborer, imbued with the belief, surviving from slavery days, that he was the higher intelligence and of the greater deserving, was determined to abolish that competition and keep the colored man "in his place," which according to these authorities is either to be an uncomplaining and hopeless drudge for white men or else to lie in the grave, I never could quite make out which.

Wendell Phillips would have perceived, too, the cowardice of the persons that understand well enough the perils of these conditions and fear to speak of them, pushing all aside with the hollow pretense that "the question ought to be left to the South, which best understands the Negro." He would have scorned the men that sit in the United States Senate and see this monstrous system of injustice carried to its limits and utter no word of protest. He would have perceived the fraudulent nature of the argument that the Negro is incapable of anything better than a menial's position in life. He would know the great truth and insist upon it that the color of a man's skin has nothing to do with either his character or his abilities; that there is no such thing in all this world as a racial difference great enough to take cognizance of; that men are everywhere

about the same; that all so-called "races" if endowed with about the same opportunities will make about the same progress; that progress is a matter of opportunity and liberty, not of complexion. He would have seen, too, how hypocritical is the assertion that the Negro in America is centuries behind the white man, for he knew that the moment the Negro secured an equal opportunity with the white man the Negro's achievements were at least as great.

All these things he felt not merely because he believed in democracy and equality as the basic creed of his religion but because he was accustomed to disregard hysteria and conventional clamor and to learn for himself the truth. Science in our day has shattered the last pretense that there is any such thing in this world as a separate race, establishing as a scientific fact the universal brotherhood that Christ taught. Phillips, in advance of his time, saw this when even other Abolitionists were befogged about the "sons of Ham" and other nonsense. He, therefore, was the one man of his day able to recite properly the wonderful story of Toussaint l'Ouverture, that man of unmixed African descent whose genius as a military commander, statesman and law-giver compelled the admiration of all Europe and re-

mains conspicuous among a thousand other illustrations that disprove the inferiority of the Negro or of any other race. Through this marvelous appreciation of one of the greatest men that ever lived shines this prophetic belief in the day to be when the world will see that all men are what environment, opportunity, liberty or bondage, poverty or sufficiency, has made them.

## VII

## THE MAN UNAFRAID ENLISTS FOR LABOR

The war was over; the once hated Abolitionists became the idols of the nation; men saw now that through all the thirty years of preparatory agitation, the cause supported by a fugitive handful had been, in fact, an eternal verity; the name, once a badge of shame, became a sign of honor.

In this great but quite natural transformation, Mr. Phillips was for a few months, the most conspicuous figure; even with the war heroes he divided the popular acclaim. The man that had been everywhere discredited as a liar and a fomentor of dissension attained of a sudden to a degree of respectability that would have unsettled one of smaller faith. In 1865 and 1866 his audience and following were beyond those of any other man in the country. Whatever he said was repeated and accepted; he was overwhelmed with invitations to speak;

on platforms, where, a few years before, his life had been in peril of murderous mobs, he spoke now to applauding thousands. For a time he was the incomparable favorite in the lecture courses; he was offered twenty times the engagements he could fill.

Before so great a popularity the doors of political preferment swung open. What office did he wish? Any place was at his choice. Would he go to Congress? Would he be Governor? Nominations were thrust before him where nomination meant election and election meant a long career in the public service.

We know now that at least one of these opportunities had for him a strong allurement. The Senate was very attractive to him; he liked its dignity and its opportunity to affect national policies. Yet, without hesitation, he put from him every temptation from the one path he had chosen for his feet, knowing well the arduous nature of the work ahead and looking forward to the time, when, because of that work, he should once more be hated.

It was, in fact, the second great turning point in his career; the most important chapter was just beginning. As no man ever does anything for but one reason, so, I suppose, inspiration itself is not single and indivisible.

To his great services and sacrifices in the anti-slavery cause, Mr. Phillips was first impelled by his fervent faith in democracy, his sense of justice and his human sympathies. But after a time he saw in it something else, whereof the vision was not possessed by his fellows, and it was this broader view that presently wrought his downfall as the idol of the hour.

While his popularity and prestige endured he used all on the side of the Negro. From the war struggle the nation passed to the reconstruction struggle; a story not exhilarating to the patriot that reads of it. To preserve for the Negro in peace what had been won for him in war demanded no less skill, determination and steady fighting.

Andrew Johnson, the friend of the former slave-holders, was now President and under his protection and encouragement the old slave oligarchy hoped to rise again. This is a fact commonly obscured or omitted in history, and yet the record of it is indubitable. Johnson was at heart a pro-slavery man and always had been. He had been chosen by Lincoln for the nomination for vice-president, and the country was now reaping a bitter harvest for that blunder. Johnson came from Tennessee, where he was one of those extremely doubtful persons, a

" favorite son." Anybody that knew anything about him knew that he was unfitted to be thrust into the second place in the government, but Lincoln was determined to have him there because of his supposed influence in the " border states " about which was much concern in the minds of the politicians. The fact that he had no convictions against slavery naturally weighed but little in the mind of Lincoln, whose environment and training had been such as largely to obscure this point.

When Johnson took office his first idea was to bring back the revolted states on the same basis on which they had existed in the Union previous to secession. The late slave-holders joyfully accepted this proposition and began to pass laws that virtually re-established slavery and would return the country to the condition it was in before the war. To prevent a catastrophe so tremendous called for the best leadership of the North, and the man that did most to preserve the hard-won fruits of liberty was Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, now almost forgotten except by those that care for history as it really is and not as it is pretended.

Stevens, Phillips and Charles Sumner, and after them Ben Wade, Henry Wilson and Schuyler Colfax, were the leaders of the ele-

ment that insisted upon enfranchisement and equal rights regardless of color. Nothing short of complete democracy would content the man to whom democracy was a religion. The opposition was led by President Johnson, who became the center of fierce dissension in the party that had elected him, and the target of some of Phillips's most bitter and acrid sarcasm.

The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution establishing equal rights represented the victory of the radical element after years of controversy.

At the outset Phillips had come to the parting of the ways with Garrison. The end of the war showed an irreconsilable difference between them. Garrison held that the work of the Abolitionists had ended; Phillips said it had just begun. Garrison wished to disband the American Anti-Slavery Society; Phillips insisted that its functions were never greater nor more important. At the annual meeting in 1865 the clash came. Garrison moved to disband; Phillips strongly opposed the motion. On the vote Phillips had a large majority and Garrison practically withdrew from the movement. Thereafter, the chief burden, including the support of the *Standard*, the society's or-

gan, fell upon the shoulders and purse of Phillips.

The two men never lost their respect for each other, but their temperamental differences were so strong that probably only the great bond of their mutual affection had previously kept them together. Garrison was a humanitarian, Phillips a militant democrat. Besides, Garrison was the elder and had suffered the more from the terrible strain of thirty-five years of fighting; his nature was to seek peace and pursue it. He was, in fact, one of gentle and student-like inclinings, driven into battle by the sheer fervor of an overmastering faith. One may surmise that with infinite relief he hailed the end of strife. We are also to consider that the intensity of his feeling against slavery had not only worn him down, but at the same time had circumscribed his view; for such is commonly the effect of a cause upon its pioneers and those whom it exclusively possesses.

With Phillips the case was very different, and here we return upon that one thing that he saw and the others failed to see. He had long understood that the foundations of the slavery question were much broader than the surface indications, for he alone of the Abolitionist leaders saw the economic origin of the issue. To

his mind, the slavery question was a labor question, and it was but one part of a still greater labor question that must be settled if society was to endure. He alone perceived that the abolition of African slavery was only one gained battle in a long warfare; he wanted to go on with the rest. Wage slavery was as truly slavery as chattel slavery and as much a thing to be abolished. Nevertheless, there was this difference, that, whereas chattel slavery was confined to a few regions in a few countries, wage slavery was universal; and while chattel slavery involved some millions, wage slavery involved and degraded the entire working class of the world.

In other words he had been thinking along economic lines and obtaining economic enlightenment; an achievement that alone would distinguish him as far in advance of his times.

He looked out upon the world and saw that everywhere the toilers, who were the sole creators of wealth, were the bottom of the social structure. They created wealth for other men to enjoy, but of the wealth they created they obtained very little for themselves. In consequence of this arrangement, steadily becoming more oppressive to them, they lived in insufficiency and under conditions that made

health, intelligence and progress impossible among them. He saw that the population thus injuriously affected was in every country the majority; that as their economic condition declined, the national vigor would be lowered; that the chattel slavery against which the Abolitionists warred was only one result of a system that less frankly enslaved working men everywhere. This was the system the Abolitionists really attacked when they made war on chattel slavery, and against this system he was resolved to continue to fight.

He had also in another way a clear view of things as they were in his time, and as they were to be after him. Nothing about this remarkable man was more wonderful than his prevision, in which he far surpassed any other man that my reading has encountered. We think it an achievement that Napoleon should have predicted the fate of Great Britain in South Africa and our naval war of 1812, but these seem small feats of prophecy compared with some that are recorded of Phillips. With substantial accuracy and equal facility he could foretell the course of any political movement or economic development, predict the path of national evolution or prophesy about inventions. He foretold wireless telegraphy and aviation with

as much certainty as the outcome of the Civil War or the ruin of President Johnson. In the midst of the anxious battle against African slavery, he foresaw the steady arising of the far greater struggle in behalf of all labor, and at the same time, the developing threat of the money power, the growth of the lawless great corporation and the approach of their control of the Government.

So with the same courage that he had shown when in 1837 he took his place with the hated Abolitionists, and in the same spirit of unselfish consecration to a great cause, he committed himself to the agitation for justice to labor, then beginning in a despised way to make itself faintly heard. It was, in a sense, a more desperate step than the other, since in the common view of the bourgeoisie, if the Abolitionists had been mad fanatics the labor agitators were the lowest dregs of humanity. But so early as November 2, 1865, Phillips took his way to a labor meeting in Faneuil Hall and made a speech in which he unequivocally declared himself in the first notable utterance in this country in favor of an eight-hour day. He said:

It is twenty-nine years this month since I first stood on the platform of Faneuil Hall to address an audience of the citizens of Boston. I felt then

that I was speaking for the cause of the laboring men, and if to-night I should make the last speech of my life, I would be glad that it should be in the same strain,— for laboring men and their rights.

The labor of these twenty-nine years has been in behalf of a race bought and sold. The South did not rest its system wholly on this claim to own its laborers; but according to Chancellor Harper, Alexander H. Stevens, Governor Pickens and John C. Calhoun, asserted that the laborer must necessarily be owned by capitalists or individuals. That struggle for the ownership of labor is now somewhere near its end; and we fitly commence a struggle to define and to arrange the true relations of capital and labor.

To-day one of your sons is born. He lies in his cradle as the child of a man without means, with a little education and with less leisure. The favored child of the capitalist is borne up by every circumstance as on the eagle's wings. The problem of to-day is how to make the chances of the two as equal as possible; and before this movement stops, every child born in America must have an equal chance in life.

Eight hours for labor, eight hours for sleep, eight hours to be the worker's own, was Mr. Phillips's view of the next great reform. I have no idea why America is so backward about these things. The eight-hour movement, so very young then in the United States, was old elsewhere. In front of the Parliament House at Melbourne, Australia, you will find a hand-

some monument to commemorate the adoption by Australia of this humane proposal. That monument had become a familiar sight to Melbourne, long before the eight-hour principle was widely recognized in the United States, a fact that may afford us another measure of Mr. Phillips's far advance upon his contemporaries.

"You must imitate the tenacity of the Abolitionists in adherence to a single issue," he went on. "A political movement saying, 'We will have our rights' is a mass meeting in perpetual session. Filtered through the ballot box comes the will of the people and statesmen bow to it. Go home and say that the working men of Massachusetts are a unit and that they mean to stereotype their purposes on the statute-book."

Such words fell like a cold douche upon thousands of men more than willing to make Phillips their hero. At first some of these tried to excuse the eccentricity by assuming that Phillips had now in mind a career in politics, and remembering that to flatter the groundlings was always permissible or even laudable in one cherishing such an ambition. The groundlings had votes and it was practical politics to make promises to them and fool them to the top of their bent. All candidates did so; it was part of the game; but of course one was not obliged

to remember such promises when one got into office.

But when Mr. Phillips calmly put aside every proffer of office and went his way insisting upon the issues he deemed important, caring not the least for popularity, his recent adherents fell rapidly away. For some reason not easy to understand in a democracy, any recognition of the essential rights of labor has always been particularly offensive to a certain part of the American public. In a few years, Phillips, for the sake of his position on labor, and for no other reason, was back again in his old situation; he was facing hatred and incessant attack in front, while behind him was a thin rank of half-hearted support.

In at least one aspect of his development the philosophical might find abundant subject for reflection. In plain speech, it was the old assailant under a new name; thereby abundantly illustrating the fact that names change and the forms of issues, but at heart the contest remains from generation to generation about the same. When, before the war, he denounced chattel slavery, he was assailed by the slaveholding Interests of the South; when, after the war, he threatened wage-slavery, he was assailed by the financial and manufacturing Interests of the

North. In both instances, the impulse of the hatred that descended upon him was identical. He threatened somebody's profits by threatening an existing system that bulwarked those profits. That is all, and that is the reason why Southern fire-eaters offered a price for his head; why mobs came with ropes to hang him; why a score of times he narrowly escaped with his life. Similarly, that alone was the reason why, at this place in his story, he became to a certain class the worst hated man in the United States. The frank Southerner of the slave-owning Interests desired to have him killed; the colder Northerner of other Interests ostracised him while he lived and exulted when he died. The difference does not seem remarkable. If the feeling of the Southern Interests seems to have been the more intense, we are to remember that the imperiled profits of the Southern Interests were correspondingly the greater.

Yet, the man that was thus hated with such an excess of passion was not one that in himself would win anything but applause from the honest and sincere. In his private walk he was kindly, generous, sympathetic and reasonable. The Southerners were long taught to regard him as their worst enemy; he was, in fact, their best friend, striving to remove from them and

from the country the evil that made us a scandal among nations and infinitely retarded the progress of the South. He never made the error of confounding men with the conditions that impel them to objectionable action. What he desired was to change the conditions.

He kept his purse drained for private charity and in behalf of the causes that he supported, filling it with proceeds from his lectures and emptying it again. No applicant for relief departed from him without assistance. After his death there came to light a thousand instances of his unostentatious generosity. A Southern woman whose family had been ruined by the war, was living in Boston by precarious returns from lectures. One morning Phillips was returning from a Massachusetts town where he had lectured the night before, and found this lady on the same train. He invited her to a seat beside him and led her to reveal to him something of her troubles. He inquired how much she received for each lecture.

"Five dollars," said she, "and I am glad to get that."

"It is not enough," said Mr. Phillips. "I get $100 or $200 and I give only opinions while you give information. You must allow me to divide my fee with you," and he finally per-

suaded her to let him put into her purse a roll of bills. When she arrived at home and examined the money she found that it was one hundred dollars.

This lady is said to have been a niece of Jefferson Davis. Ten years before she would probably have heard with pleasure that Wendell Phillips, the damned Abolitionist, had been lynched, because he was trying to interfere with the profits of the slave-owners. In the car with her that morning rode men that scowled with no less hatred upon Wendell Phillips, the damned labor agitator, because he was trying to interfere with the profits of the labor exploiters. It would puzzle the ordinary mind to detect the essential difference.

Mr. Everett O. Foss, a prominent citizen of Dover, New Hampshire, supplies me with this anecdote, not before printed.

Mr. Foss was an ardent admirer of Phillips and undertook, on his own responsibility, when he was a very young man, to have his idol deliver a lecture in Dover. The town was deluged with a terrific storm that night and only one person appeared at the hall. Instead of lecturing, Mr. Phillips invited Mr. Foss across the street to the old American House, where he ordered a pot of tea, his favorite bev-

erage, and sat and talked until late into the night. It was a wonderful strain of speech that Mr. Foss was privileged to hear; Phillips seemed to have read everything and to have been everywhere, and he went lightly over and through all the topics of the day, illuminating each with a wealth of illustrations, facts, epigrams, views, stories and quotations, such as probably no other man then alive could have given.

Later Mr. Foss induced Phillips to return to Dover and again attempt a lecture. For some reason it was poorly attended, but Mr. Phillips spoke with his accustomed force and brilliancy, for the size of his audience never made any difference to him. After he had made an end, he and Foss once more adjourned to the hotel and tea.

"Mr. Foss," said Phillips, suddenly, "how much have you lost on this lecture engagement?"

Mr. Foss tried to evade the subject, but Phillips persisted until the young man named the approximate amount.

"You must let me share it," said Phillips, and produced bills to half the amount, which he insisted, and would not be denied, that Mr. Foss should accept. They drank their tea

and talked for a time and then Phillips said suddenly:

"Mr. Foss, do you know, I have a partner in this business and one that holds me to a very strict account for everything I do? It is my wife. Now she will want to know all about this affair and she will not like it. I don't dare to go home and tell her of it as the case now stands. I shall have to make a little change in our arrangements in order to satisfy her. I shall have to ask you to take the rest of this money, or I shall never be able to make my partner think that I have done right." Nor would he desist until Mr. Foss had accepted the proffer.

Managers of lyceum courses can relate of other famous lecturers anecdotes of quite a different flavor.

## VIII

## PHILLIPS THE SOCIALIST

To Mr. Phillips, after the war closed, the work before him seemed perfectly clear. All that had been gained was no more than a beginning. Part of a great evil had been abolished; the achievement merely revealed the greater task. Others might be willing to sit with folded hands; he fought right on. He saw about him a nation cursed with poverty in the midst of abounding wealth; afflicted with intemperance, the product of poverty; afflicted with a foolish, medieval superstition that excluded women from the ballot; denying education and opportunity to the greater part of its children. At the same time its toilers were overworked and underfed, its free institutions were threatened by an abnormal aggregation of riches in the hands of a few, and the process steadily developed under which the rich must grow richer and the poor poorer. Here, it seemed to him, lay a great field, demanding the

ceaseless labors of any man that believed in democracy and the rise of the race.

Turning over the records of these ten or twelve years, his activities seem prodigious. He carried on the *Standard*, fought with almost savage pertinacity for the rights of the Negro and against the policies of the Johnson administration, argued for the cause of Ireland against England, the cause of Crete against Turkey, the cause of the Indians against the United States, for woman suffrage, for the outcasts of the street, and in and out of season for the cause of labor. To all this there is no companion record, for he had nothing to gain from all this campaigning; not even applause.

Enlightenment seems to be an order of mind; if a man dwells in a cave about one question you can usually find him feudal on everything else that pertains to human progress. If he hates the "nigger" he rejects woman suffrage; if he objects to free speech he believes that you can lower the cost of living by putting slippery elm on the free list. Conversely, I have seldom found a man that believed in woman suffrage that was not also an opponent of war, capital punishment and the ethics of the jungle. All his days Mr. Phillips was a

fervent antagonist of the barbarism of capital punishment and to agitate against it on every suitable occasion was one of the labors of these busy days. So far back as 1855 in an elaborate argument on this topic he said:

The harvest of the gallows is reaped from the poor, the ignorant, the friendless — the men who, in the touching language of Charles Lamb, are "never brought up, but dragged up"; who never knew what it was to have a mother, to have education, moral restraint. They have been left on the highways, vicious, drunken, neglected. Society cast them off. She never extended over them a single gentle care; but the first time this crop of human passion, the growth of which she never checked, manifests itself — the first time that ill-regulated being puts forth his hand to do an act of violence, society puts forth her hand and strangles him! Has society done her duty? Could the intelligence, the moral sense and the religion of Massachusetts go up and stand by the side of that poor unfortunate Negro, who was the last man executed in this Commonwealth, and say that they had done their duty by him? He had passed his life in scenes of vice; he had never known what it was to have a human being speak to him in a tone of sympathy. Had society done her duty? He never landed in our city but the harpies of licentiousness and drink beset him, and the churches never rose up in their majesty to forbid it. Steeped to the lips in vice for thirty years, when society found him guilty of an act of violence, the natural result of such a life, did society take him and say, "God gave this man to me an innocent

soul, and I have let him grow up into this monster, and now I will take him and restrain him; I will throw around him moral influences, and see if I cannot make a human being of him"? Did society retreat to the wall? Did she try to save that man? No; she inflicted upon him the severest punishment — she took away his life. "Society is an instrument of good," said one of your members a few days ago. Then she is bound to educate the man thrown into her hands. . . .

If you can come down one step, if you can give up the rack and the wheel, impaling, tearing to death with wild horses, why cannot you come down two and adopt imprisonment? Why cannot you come down three, and instead of putting the man in jail, make your prisons, as Brougham recommends, moral hospitals, and educate him? Why cannot you come down four and put him under the influence of some community of individuals who will labor to waken again the moral feelings and sympathies of his nature?

He was the persistent, tireless, whole-hearted friend of Ireland and the Irish patriots, defending them with the full force of his eloquence against the slanders of Froude and others. He watched with such sympathy as Swinburne and other radicals showed the struggle of Italy to be free, and when at last that was accomplished he wrote this:

At all times, the fate of Rome has been of utmost interest. Every scholar, every lover of art, every student of jurisprudence, every apostle of liberty, remembers that, after leading the old

world, Rome guarded its treasures across the gulf of the middle and troubled ages. To every lover of the past and every servant of the future it seems natural to call Italy "My Country." Three centuries ago she inspired modern civilization. In this generation the battle for European liberty has centered on Rome. At last she opens her gates to the nineteenth century.

Congratulations to Garibaldi and Mazzini. They behold the morning. What will the noon be? Nothing less than Europe a brotherhood of republics.

Kings, like other spectres, will vanish at the cock-crowing.

May the glory and service of Rome in this new epoch transcend her "trebly hundred triumphs" and all the splendor of the age of Leo.

But the feature of Wendell Phillips's life and faith of which the least has been said pertains to his convictions about economics.

Few persons in this country have any conception of his radical views about finance, cooperation, the division of wealth, trades unions, and other problems that in our day have become acute, nor how far he was in advance of any other public man of his day. He was the first prominent American to adopt the doctrine now become familiar as the first plank in the program of the Socialist party. The fact has always been sedulously concealed, but he was a Socialist, neither more nor less. He was con-

vinced of the essential truth of the Socialist philosophy, and being so convinced, note next how he stood by the faith.

In 1871, he was instrumental in bringing about a Labor Reform Convention held at Worcester, Massachusetts. He was its chairman and wrote its platform, which was unanimously adopted. The very first sentence contains the substance of the modern Socialistic creed:

> We affirm, as a fundamental principle, that labor, the creator of wealth, is entitled to all it creates.

I do not know how there could be a more explicit declaration. But listen to what follows:

> Affirming this, we avow ourselves willing to accept the final results of the operation of a principle so radical — such as the overthrow of the whole profit-making system, the extinction of all monopolies, the abolition of privileged classes, universal education and fraternity, perfect freedom of exchange, and best and grandest of all, the final obliteration of that foul stigma upon our so-called Christian civilization, the poverty of the masses.

All this in 1871 — think of it! The Socialist platform makers of to-day have hardly gone beyond most of it.

Resolved, that we declare war with the wages system, which demoralizes alike the hirer and the hired, cheats both and enslaves the working man; war with the present system of finance, which robs labor and gorges capital, makes the rich richer and the poor poorer and turns a republic into an aristocracy of capital; war with these lavish grants of the public lands to speculating companies, and whenever in power, we pledge ourselves to use every just and legal means to resume all such grants heretofore made; war with the system of enriching capitalists by the creation and increase of public interest-bearing debts.

We demand that every facility and all encouragement shall be given by law to co-operation in all branches of industry and trade, and that the same aid be given to co-operative efforts that has heretofore been given to railroads and other enterprises.

At that time the employees of mills and factories were worked twelve and sometimes fourteen hours a day and few persons could see anything wrong in the system. On this subject the resolutions of Mr. Phillips declare:

We demand a ten-hour day for factory work, as a first step, and that eight hours be the working-day of all persons thus employed hereafter.

He even recognized, so far in advance of his times, the principle of equal pay for equal work.

We demand that whenever women are employed at public expense to do the same kind and amount of work as men perform, they shall receive the same wages.

He saw clearly that interest-bearing bonds are a bulwark to the exploiting classes. In the next sentence he said:

We demand that all public debts be paid at once in accordance with the terms of the contract, and that no more debts be created.

And he foresaw the evils of contract labor, for almost twenty years in advance of legislation on this subject he said in his platform:

Viewing the contract importation of coolies as only another form of the slave-trade, we demand that all contracts made relative thereto be void in this country.

When he presented this platform, Mr. Phillips said, addressing the convention:

I regard the movement with which this convention is connected as the grandest and most comprehensive movement of the age. And I choose my epithets deliberately; for I can hardly name the idea in which humanity is interested that I do not consider locked up in the success of this movement of the people to take possession of their own.

In the forty years that have passed since that utterance, there has not appeared a better

statement of the nature of the proletarian inspiration.

Renewed clamor broke out when this platform and his speech thereon appeared. The newspapers called Phillips a nihilist and a dangerous person; they had not yet learned the word anarchist, that in later years they applied indiscriminately to every man that protested against existing conditions. From this time Mr. Phillips's reputation steadily declined. Many persons viewed with sorrow the sad failure of the promise of the war period. He might have been sensible and successful; he might have gone to Congress or been a Senator or a judge. Instead, he insisted upon casting in his lot with this handful of rag-tag and bobtail. And who were they? Nothing but common working men! Sad was the case, and attention was once more directed to the fact that in his earlier days his family had tried to lock him up in an insane asylum because he attacked African slavery. Perhaps there was something in that. Certainly any man that aligned himself with a lot of greasy mechanics could hardly be right in his mind.

In the previous year he had accepted from the Labor and Temperance parties a nomination for Governor, knowing, of course, that his

election was impossible, but seizing the opportunity to gain audiences for his two favorite causes.

In his letter, dated September 12, 1870, accepting the nomination of the Labor Party he said:

Law should do all it can to give the masses more leisure, a more complete education, better opportunities, and a fair share of profits. It is a shame to our Christianity and civilization for our social system to provide and expect that one man at seventy years of age shall be lord of many thousands of dollars, while hundreds of other men, who have made as good use of their talents and opportunities, lean upon charity for their daily bread. Of course, there must be inequalities. But the best minds and hearts of the land should give themselves to the work of changing this gross injustice, this appalling inequality. I feel sure that the readiest way to turn public thought and effort into this channel, is for the workingmen to organize a political party. No social question ever gets fearlessly treated here till we make politics turn on it. The real American college is the ballot-box. On questions like these, a political party is the surest and readiest, if not the only, way to stir discussion, and secure improvement.

If my name will strengthen your movement, you are welcome to it.

Allow me to add, that, though we work for a large vote, we should not be discouraged by a small one.

Your truly,

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

He received in the State about twenty thousand votes.

In 1871 he intensified the feeling against him in the better classes by giving his support to General Benjamin F. Butler, who was making an active canvass for the Governorship. This incident has grievously afflicted his courtly biographer, who has adopted the current explanation that Phillips supported Butler because of the old friendship begun at Lowell when both were youths. All his life Phillips had sacrificed his personal preference to his sense of duty, and his friendships and even his family ties to his convictions. He had been bound to Garrison by tender bonds of affection and admiration; yet even from Garrison he had parted for the sake of principle. He had never been intimate with Butler; the two had little in common; yet the comical explanation is still urged that some excess of personal friendship brought him to Butler's support.

I suppose that for an act so inexpressibly offensive to the social and political Brahmins of Massachusetts some unusual reason was demanded, but the truth is that Phillips applied to Butler the same standard he applied to every other public man. What ideas did he stand for? For justice to labor, for the plain people

and for the cause of temperance. That was enough. Phillips supported him.

Butler was defeated in the Republican convention, but we are to hear more of him in this story.

Upon every possible occasion Mr. Phillips continued to call the attention of his countrymen to the growing peril of corporation supremacy in their affairs and to the demands of labor. Some of his utterances at this period, because of their astonishingly accurate forecast of coming conditions in America, are likely to startle any present day reader. Investigators of the modern situation have done nothing more than to verify his predictions. Thus in October, 1871, he said this:

> The land of England [meaning the great estates] has ruled it for six hundred years. The corporations of America mean to rule it in the same way, and unless some power more radical than that of ordinary politics is found, will rule it inevitably.
>
> I confess that the only fear I have in regard to republican institutions is whether, in our day, any adequate remedy will be found for this incoming flood of the power of incorporated wealth. No statesman, no public man yet, has dared to defy it. Every man that has met it has been crushed to powder; and the only hope of any effective grapple with it is in rousing the actual masses,

whose interests permanently lie in an opposite direction, to grapple with this force.

And again:

To me the Labor movement means just this: It is the last noble protest against the power of incorporated wealth, seeking to do again what the Whig aristocracy of Great Britain has successfully done for two hundred years. Thirty thousand families own Great Britain to-day.

In a speech delivered in April, 1872, he said:

I rejoice at every effort working men make to organize; I do not care on what basis they do it. Men sometimes say to me: "Are you an Internationalist?" I say, I do not know what an Internationalist is; but they tell me it is a system by which the working men from London to Gibraltar, from Moscow to Paris, can clasp hands. Then I say "Godspeed, Godspeed, to that or any similar movements."

So I welcome organization. I do not care whether it calls itself Trades-Union, Crispin, International or Commune; anything that masses up the units in order that they may put in a united force to face the organization of capital; anything that does that, I say amen to it.

No mincing of words. Now, as in the Abolition days, he accepted the full measure of faith and stood squarely upon that, never flinching. And here I take occasion to point out another of his traits, well worth the atten-

tion of a nation so overfond of compromise. With Wendell Phillips it was either one thing or the other; either support or no support. If he believed in a cause, he stood for the whole of it and to the end. He would waste neither time nor effort in half-hearted advocacy of any movement, since all about him were so many conflicts to which he could give unreservedly the limit of his enthusiasm and strength.

But when individual public men were to be considered he had a different feeling. His idea was to take the good in every man and make the most of it but never to acquiesce in the evil. At all times he discountenanced and despised the hysteria of hero worship that seems to possess Americans above any other people. Because a President had done one good thing, that did not mean that he was a divinity. Phillips knew men well enough to know that the differences of ability and intellect were not great enough to warrant canonization, and that the only really important differences were in moral purpose and in service to the race. His attitude toward President Grant was typical. He praised Grant for upholding the rights of the colored people but condemned his treatment of Sumner and his policy about Santo Domingo.

One more instance of his extraordinary powers occurring in these days ought not to be omitted from this chronicle. It was in 1875. Grant, with the aid of Federal troops, was trying to restore order in Louisiana, where former Confederates had risen against a Governor elected by enfranchised colored men. Southern sympathizers in Boston called a meeting at Fanueil Hall to denounce Grant's course in this regard. Mr. Phillips attended, sitting in the gallery, and with no intention of speaking. Men on the floor below, noting his silent figure, began to call for a speech from him. He sat quite still, his arm resting upon his cane and his chin upon his arm while he grimly watched the proceedings. The clamor for him becoming so great that the meeting could not proceed, the chairman was obliged to invite him to speak. He slowly arose in his place and in a profound hush began an address. Then, in the old place, the familiar old scene was reenacted. At the first sentence arose hisses and violent outcries; then ensued a gradually diminishing clamor; then silence; then applause; and the meeting that had been called to denounce Grant adopted a resolution in his support.

It was about this time that I first heard him. He was lecturing on Charles Sumner. While

a local celebrity went through the form of introducing him, he sat on a sofa at the back of the stage and looked upon us in a way that spoke at once extreme kindness and yet authority and confidence. When he arose and came forward there was something peculiarly graceful in his movements; when he began to speak a thrill of astonishment and pleasure went over the audience. Every mind hung upon each word that fell from his lips. When he was done a man near me protested at the brevity of the address; Mr. Phillips had spoken nearly two hours, but none of us knew it. His tall, powerful figure seemed to be the embodiment of strength in repose and gave an impression of intellectual supremacy, the like of which I have never known. His hair was quite gray, his eyes were keen and kindly, his complexion ruddy and eloquent of health and right living. His expression was tinged with a certain melancholy, such as I have observed in the faces of most men to whom life means more than lust and gluttony, but was wonderfully strong and as if the man within saw only fine and beautiful things not known to the rest of us. I doubt if any person that heard him ever quite lost the mental effect he created.

Something pathetic pertains to his life in

these years. His private charities and his support of the Anti-Slavery *Standard* had strained his little means, so that he was obliged to go about the country lecturing, although he had long hoped to be able to spend his winters in quiet and comfort and the company of Mrs. Phillips. His lecture seasons began in November and lasted until April. They took him on long tours through every Northern State, sometimes entailing great hardship and exposure. He was long past sixty, his life had been one ceaseless struggle, he was beginning to feel the strain. The lectures, too, failed somewhat in popularity after he had come to be regarded as a maniac and dangerous person on the labor question. Yet he must needs go the weary round year after year. Something pathetic pertained also to his own view of himself. He recognized fully the utter isolation he had made. With a kind of smiling sadness, infinitely moving, he used to refer to himself as "that Ishmaelite," and once he wrote that his home was a sleeping car and his only friends were the brakemen and porters. The health of Mrs. Phillips continued to be, in her own opinion, most precarious, and gave him ceaseless concern. Thousands of adherents that on the slavery issue had stood by him loyally, turned

from him as soon as he took up the cause of labor. Others were old and retired, the fire gone out, the spirit sitting in the ashes. Many others had died. The generation before which he had played so great a part was passing; he was being left alone. Many another man so situated would have abandoned a cause utterly unpromising and retired to his fireside for peace and enjoyment in his closing years. Wendell Phillips went straight on.

## IX

## THE MODERN WAR AGAINST PRIVILEGE

Some men view the human cause with congenital indifference; some serve in it spasmodically and at the touch of an intermittent conscience; some view it, I should judge, as a kind of diversion; some seek it for their own preferment.

To Wendell Phillips it was a sublime religion whereof he was the conscientious devotee, serving without remission and performing with equal fidelity and in a spirit of joyous zeal all rites great or small. Liberty he loved with a kind of passion and a fervent loyalty that never wavered nor doubted; for unlike so many others of her followers, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Burke and the rest, the years never chilled the fire in his breast. Out of his religion he made a creed broad enough for all aspects of life. For all public affairs he worshiped justice as the cure of evil; and it seemed to him that every victim

of injustice anywhere in the world had an infallible claim upon the utmost service of every true man. For the private walk, apart from the world, mercy, kindness and purity were the sure guides.

He did not only the charity that came in his way to do, but sought abroad for occasions to practise the faith that was in him. For the most unfortunate victims of the present system of society he had the genuine sympathy and broad personal tolerance that seems to come only to those that, like Phillips, have worked out for themselves the economic bases of all social ills. He felt no repugnance toward criminals and jail-birds, understanding that these are merely the products of a system that darkens the whole earth with countless miseries. He knew that men are chiefly what their environments make them, and he turned his resentment upon the environments, not upon the stricken creatures that were sent out thence to prey upon the world.

When he was in Boston, it was his custom to go about in the mornings unostentatiously from court to court and from prison to prison looking for unfortunate persons, first offenders and those that had plainly erred from necessity, with purpose to help and rescue them. Many

a young man that had started wrong found his path reversed for him and never knew whose hand was reached out to him in the dark; and it was partly these ventures in practical charity, too little celebrated, that kept his purse lean and compelled him, in his own phrase, to spend his winters battling with snow-drifts as he toured the country delivering lectures.

As a general rule, in this world of ours, the men that have been the great and enduring artists have been also lovers of Liberty, and the lovers of Liberty have been also of a full heart of compassion. If you are a follower of Shelley, the poet of Liberty, you have no doubt paused often (not always with undimmed eyes, very likely) above that story of Shelley at Great Marlow when he alone befriended and championed the wretched girl that had been led astray. Note then its companion piece in the life of Liberty's orator.

Going home across Boston Common one night Mr. Phillips was accosted by a courtezan. She looked in his face and then apologized for speaking to him. "You are not of my kind," she said, "but for the love of God, give me some money." He stopped and talked with her; he was not ashamed, bearing in mind his Master and the Magdalene, to take her arm

and walk with her while he questioned her; and he ended by providing her with shelter and employment until he had the satisfaction of seeing her emancipated and reformed. This is the one incident of the kind of which we have positive record, but we may be sure that it was not alone in his experience.

In all this he makes one think of such a knight as dear old Edmund Spenser dreamed, going about with unmixed devotion to do loyal service for some noble conception of duty. Indeed, I have stumbled here upon the very word that best describes him. "Sir Galahad," a great poet named him in one of the fairest of all the tributes to his fame, and upon every one that saw him for the first time there was always, I think, an impression made of a something knightly about the man. "A courteous, kindly, but most courageous warrior," another observer calls him, "the very Red Cross Knight of his times."

In the world of profits, employers and business, he continued to be the Ishmael, for without hint of turning, he went his way denouncing the system that bulwarked profits on one side and multiplied poverty on the other. Labor first and all the phases of its cause, and all the forces that preyed upon it, then tem-

perance and woman suffrage were more and more the favorite themes of his addresses. I ought to give you a few specimens from these vigorous appeals. Here, for instance, is one on the burning economic issue of our day as well as his:

Let me tell you why I am interested in the labor question. Not simply because of the long hours of labor; not simply because of a specific oppression of a class. I sympathize with the sufferers there; I am ready to fight on their side. But I look out upon Christendom, with its three hundred millions of people, and I see that out of this number one hundred millions never had enough to eat. Physiologists tell us that this body of ours, unless it is properly fed, properly developed, fed with rich blood and carefully nourished, does no justice to the brain. You can not make a bright man nor a good man in a starved body, and so this one-third of the inhabitants of Christendom, who have never had food enough, can never be what they should be.

Now I say that the social civilization which condemns every third man in it to be below the average in the nourishment God prepared for him did not come from above; it came from below, and the sooner it goes down the better.

Come on this side of the ocean. You will find forty millions of people, and I suppose they are in the highest state of civilization; and yet it is not too much to say that out of that forty millions, ten millions, at least, who get up in the morning and go to bed at night, spend all the day in the mere effort to get bread enough to live.

They have not elasticity enough, mind or body left to do anything in the way of intellectual or moral progress.

Since that time, of course, all the evil conditions that Mr. Phillips perceived and decried have vastly increased upon us.

That is why I say, lift a man, give him life, let him work eight hours a day, give him the school, develop his taste for music, give him a garden, give him beautiful things to see and good books to read, and you will starve out those lower appetites. . . . So it is with women in prostitution. Poverty is the road to it; it is this that makes them the prey of the wealthy and the leisure of another class. . . . Give a hundred women a good chance to get a good living, and ninety-nine of them will disdain to barter their virtue for gold.

He saw that poverty was the source of social evils and that poverty was unnecessary. Observe how clearly he saw, also, the threat of the autocracy of wealth.

I hail the Labor movement for two reasons; and one is that it is my only hope for democracy. At the time of the anti-slavery agitation, I was not sure whether we should come out of the struggle with one republic or two; but republics I knew we should still be. I am not so confident, indeed, that we shall come out of this storm as a republic unless the Labor movement succeeds. Take a power like the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New York Central Railroad, and there is no legislative independence that can exist in its sight. As well

expect a green vine to flourish in a dark cellar as to expect honesty to exist under the shadow of those upas trees. Unless there is a power in your movement, industrially and politically, the last knell of democratic liberty in this Union is struck; for, as I said, there is no power in one State to resist such a giant as the Pennsylvania road.

Colonel Thomas Scott, of the Pennsylvania, was the J. Pierpont Morgan of his day, and of him Mr. Phillips said:

We have thirty-eight one-horse Legislatures in this country, and we have a man like Tom Scott, with three hundred and fifty million dollars in his hands; and if he walks through the States, they [the Legislatures] have no power. Why, he need not move at all. If he smokes as Grant does, a puff of the waste smoke out of his mouth upsets the Legislature.

Now, there is nothing but the rallying of men against money that can contest with that power. Rally industrially if you will; rally for eight hours, for a little division of profits, for co-operation; rally for such a banking power in the government as would give us money at three per cent.

Only organize and stand together. Claim something together and at once; let the nation hear a united demand from the laboring voice, and then, when you have got that, go on after another; but get something.

I say, let the debts of the country be paid, abolish the banks, and let the government lend every Illinois farmer (if he wants it) who is now borrowing money at 10 per cent, money on the half-value of his land at 3 per cent. The same

policy that gave a million acres to the Pacific Railroad, because it was a great national effort, will allow of our lending Chicago twenty millions of money at 3 per cent, to rebuild it [after the great Chicago fire].

From Boston to New Orleans, from Mobile to Rochester, from Baltimore to St. Louis, we have now but one purpose; and that is, having driven all other political questions out of the arena, having abolished slavery, the only question left is labor — the relations of capital and labor. . . .

If you do your duty — and by that I mean standing together and being true to each other — the Presidential election you will decide, every state election you may decide if you please.

If you want power in this country; if you want to make yourselves felt; if you do not want your children to wait long years before they have the bread on the table they ought to have, the leisure in their lives they ought to have, the opportunities in life they ought to have; if you don't want to wait yourselves — write on your banner, so that every political trimmer can read it, so that every politician, no matter how short-sighted he may be, can read it, "We never forget! If you launch the arrow of sarcasm at labor, we never forget; if there is a division in Congress, and you throw your vote in the wrong scale, we never forget. You may go down on your knees and say, 'I am sorry I did the act'; and we will say, 'It will avail you in heaven, but on this side of the grave never.'" So that a man in taking up the Labor Question will know he is dealing with a hair-trigger pistol, and will say, "I am to be true to justice and to man; otherwise I am a dead duck."

The one way out of the nation's sore trouble and from the monstrous injustice that labor suffered lay in the organization and united political efforts of the working class. He saw it and in every address he made on labor he urged it. Once he said:

> Now, let me tell you where the great weakness of an association of workingmen is. It is that it cannot wait. It does not know where to get its food for next week. If it is kept idle for ten days, the funds of the society are exhausted. Capital can fold its arms, and wait six months; it can wait a year. It will be poorer, but it does not get to the bottom of the purse. It can afford to wait; it can tire you out, and starve you out. And what is there against that immense preponderance of power on the part of capital? Simply organization. *That makes the wealth of all the wealth of every one.* So I welcome organization. . . . One hundred thousand men! It is an immense army. I do not care whether it considers chiefly the industrial or the political questions; it can control the nation if it is in earnest. The reason why the Abolitionists brought the nation down to fighting their battle is that they were really in earnest, knew what they wanted, and were determined to have it. Therefore they got it. The leading statesmen and orators of the day said they would never urge Abolition; but a determined man in a printing-office said that they should, and — they did it.

As to the necessity of political action he said:

Gentlemen, we see the benefit of going into politics. If we had not rushed into politics, had not taken Massachusetts by the four corners and shaken her, you never would have written your criticisms. We rush into politics because politics is the safety-valve. We could discuss as well as you if you would only give us bread and houses, fair pay and leisure, and opportunities to travel: we could sit and discuss the question for the next fifty years. It's a very easy thing to discuss, for a gentleman in his study, with no anxiety about to-morrow. Why, the ladies and gentlemen of the reign of Louis XV and Louis XVI, in France, seated in gilded saloons and on Persian carpets, surrounded with luxury, with the products of India and the curious manufactures of ingenious Lyons and Rheims, discussed the rights of man, and balanced them in dainty phrases, and expressed them in such quaint generalizations that Jefferson borrowed the Declaration of Independence from their hands. There they sat, balancing and discussing sweetly, making out new theories, and daily erecting a splendid architecture of debate, till the angry crowd broke open the doors, and ended the discussion in blood. They waited too long, discussed about half a century too long. You see, discussion is very good when a man has bread to eat, and his children all portioned off, and his daughters married, and his house furnished and paid for, and his will made; but discussion is very bad when

. . . " Ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers!
Ere the sorrow comes with years ";

discussion is bad when a class bends under actual oppression. We want immediate action.

In his great speech, "The Foundation of the Labor Movement," he said:

The labor of yesterday, capital, is protected sacredly. Not so the labor of to-day. The labor of yesterday gets twice the protection and twice the pay that the labor of to-day gets. Why is it not entitled to an equal share?

Are you quite certain that capital — the child of artificial laws, the product of society, the mere growth of social life — has a right to only an equal burden with labor, the living spring? We doubt it so much that we think we have invented a way to defeat the Pennsylvania Central. We think we have devised a little plan by which we will save the Congress of the nation from the moneyed corporations of the State. When we get into power, there is one thing we mean to do. If a man owns a single house, we will tax him one hundred dollars. If he owns ten houses of like value, we won't tax him one thousand dollars, but two thousand dollars. If he owns a hundred houses, we won't tax him ten thousand dollars, but sixty thousand dollars; and the richer a man grows, the bigger his tax, so that when he is worth forty million dollars he shall not have more than twenty thousand dollars a year to live on. We'll double and treble and quintuple and sextuple and increase tenfold the taxes, till Stewart out of his uncounted millions, and the Pennsylvania Central out of its measureless income, shall not have anything more than a moderate lodging and an honest table. The corporations we would have are those of associated labor and capital, — co-operation.

We'll crumble up wealth by making it unprofitable to be rich. The poor man shall have a larger

income in proportion as he is poor. The rich man shall have a lesser income in proportion as he is rich. You will say, "Is that just?" My friends, it is safe. Man is more valuable than money. You say, "Then capital will go to Europe." Good heavens, let it go!

About this time he received a visit from Lucien Sanial, who had been one of the early republican patriots of France and was then a leader of the International, one of the first working men's alliances. Mr. Sanial explained the scope and purposes and platform of the order in which he was so much interested. Mr. Phillips listened until his visitor made an end and then reaching into his desk produced writings and speeches of his own in which he had advocated the identical principles of the International. Mr. Sanial was delighted and urged him to take up the cause and lead it and make it popular in America. Mr. Phillips sadly shook his head.

"I am too old," he said. "I must no longer think of doing the work of you young men. I can give you all my sympathy, and do, but the day for new causes has passed from me. Do you young men take it up and carry it through to success."

This is the first acknowledgment I have found from him anywhere that he was beginning to

feel the burden of years and of labors. For nearly forty years these had been incessant. Except for that one excursion to Europe in his youth, he had not known, since he stepped upon the platform of Faneuil Hall at the Lovejoy meeting, one day of rest. Some friends now urged him to take the repose that he had earned, but although Mr. Phillips did not feel equal to embarking upon new and arduous movements, he was still less willing to keep silent upon the issues to which he had given his faith. He foresaw that his part was to die in the harness, not to rust in idleness, and he continued to give unequivocal testimony in their behalf.

Men called Napoleon the Sword of the French Revolution. Phillips was the perfect son of the American Revolution and the embodiment of its idea. All its achievements and its great intellectual leaders he viewed with a peculiar reverence, and his favorite line of thinking was that what they were to the monarchists of their day the true American ought to be toward the reactionaries of his. So much as was gained for progress by the generation of the Revolution ought to be gained for progress by every generation; for there should be no such thing as standing still, no such thing as contentment with what had been inherited from the

past. Every age should have its Samuel Adams, its James Otis and its Patrick Henry.

The places that these men had made famous by their deeds or speeches were sacred to him; in his walks about the city he was fond of visiting them and recalling the memories attached to each; and none was dearer to him than the Old South Meeting House, the oldest building in Boston. In 1876, business threatened to destroy this interesting relic, for it had been sold by the Society that owned it and the ground space was demanded by profits. Mr. Phillips took part in a movement that, appealing to the patriotic pride of Boston, raised a fund large enough to preserve the historic building. In behalf of this movement he delivered on June 14, 1876, in the church itself, one of the most famous of his orations. He said:

> These arches will speak to us, as long as they stand, of the sublime and sturdy religious enthusiasm of Adams; of Otis's passionate eloquence and single-hearted devotion; of Warren in his young genius and enthusiasm; of a plain, unaffected but high-souled people who ventured all for a principle, and to transmit to us, unimpaired, the free life and self-government which they inherited. Above and around us unseen hands have written, "This is the cradle of Civil Liberty, child of earnest religious faith." I will not say

it is a nobler consecration; I will not say that it is a better use. I only say that we come here to save what our fathers consecrated to the memories of the most successful struggle the race has ever made for the liberties of man. Think twice before you touch these walls. We are only the world's trustees. The Old South no more belongs to us than Luther's or Hampden's or Brutus's name does to Germany, England or Rome. Each and all are held in trust as torchlight guides and inspiration for any man struggling for justice and ready to die for the truth.

Among those that listened to and applauded his address on this occasion was Dom Pedro, then Emperor of Brazil. Great as it was, Mr. Phillips surpassed it three years later by his wonderful and moving tribute to William Lloyd Garrison, whose life of service came to an end on May 23, 1879. "Serene, fearless, marvelous man! Mortal, with so few shortcomings! Farewell, for a very little while, noblest of Christian men! Leader, brave, tireless, unselfish! When the ear heard thee, then it blessed thee; the eye that saw thee gave witness to thee. More truly than it could ever heretofore be said since the great patriarch wrote it, 'the blessing of him that was ready to perish' was thine eternal great reward."

All these years he continued upon the lecture platform throughout each winter season. The

range of his subjects was phenomenal; no other orator has ever attained to so wide a variety. He had a most unusual gift by which he made interesting every topic he touched upon, so that whether his lectures were upon phases of science, history, biography, reform, political economy, law, religion or politics, the listener was always charmed and always carried away a new thought or a memorable phrase. Sometimes he wove together into one his discourses upon "Labor," "Temperance" and "Woman Suffrage," his three favorite reforms; and once he accomplished the seemingly impossible feat of uniting into one lecture addresses so far apart as "Toussaint L'Ouverture" and "The Lost Arts." This latter achievement was to relieve the embarrassment of a rural lyceum association that could not decide which of the two it would prefer.

# X

## THE ATTACK ON THE CITADEL OF REACTION

There is courage for the battle-field and another order of courage that stands squarely before the hostile ranks of one's own order and deliberately speaks home the most unpalatable truths. When in 1861 mobs pursued him across Boston Common and besieged his house, Mr. Phillips looked upon them with absolutely unshaken fortitude. "All this time," said Colonel Higginson, a witness of the scene, "there was something peculiarly striking and characteristic in his demeanor. There was absolutely nothing of bull-dog combativeness; but a careless, buoyant, almost patrician air, as if nothing in the way of mob-violence were worth considering, and all the threats of opponents were simply beneath contempt." This was his physical courage in 1861 when his life was incessantly in peril.

In 1881 he gave, of many, the most conspic-

uous illustration of the still nobler courage that speaks conviction disregarding aught else. Although he was a graduate of Harvard, and its most distinguished living graduate, the institution had never paid to him the slightest token of regard or appreciation, but had stood aloof, looking upon him with cold disapproval as a mere agitator. But in 1881 he was invited by his own literary society to deliver the Phi Beta Kappa oration. Colonel Higginson testifies that "an unwilling audience" assembled on this occasion, and assuredly it was not without reason unwilling, for there is not of record another such terrific arraignment as reactionary scholasticism received that day.

"The Scholar in a Republic" was the title Mr. Phillips chose for his address. He had prepared it with great care, recognizing that at last he had an opportunity to strike one great blow at the traditional enemy of democracy in America; for then as now the American university was the great backward looking influence in the national life. He had known only too well in his own career how doggedly the American college sets its back against every democratic advance; how cowardly the educated class had been in the slavery issue; how persistently it had hampered the feet

of the Abolition movement; how it had sneered and was then sneering at every mention of the labor question, more momentous than chattel slavery. He must have made up his mind to say this to his hearers in words they could not possibly forget. The men he was to address were the very Brahmins of that social order into which he himself had been born. He was, therefore, doubly affronting them, for in their eyes he was here again, as so often before, a traitor to his caste; but now with offense peculiar and redoubled.

Into the very face of the cold and intellectual aristocracy he hurled the unadorned truth. He tempered no words, he disguised nothing, he drove home his bare convictions and spared none. Colonel Higginson, who heard it, says that this was the most remarkable effort of Mr. Phillips's life. "He never seemed more at ease, more colloquial and more extemporaneous." Yet in form, construction, compact utterance, lofty and well considered ideas, it is the most perfect specimen of American eloquence. A kind of noble passion vibrates in every word of it, as paragraph by paragraph it tears from the reactionary scholar the veil of hypocrisy and leaves him naked and contemptible.

Timid scholarship either shrinks from sharing in these agitations or denounces them as vulgar and dangerous interference by incompetent hands with matters above them. A chronic distrust of the people pervades the book-educated class of the North; they shrink from that free speech which is God's normal school for educating men, throwing upon them the grave responsibility of deciding great questions and so lifting them to a higher level of intellectual and moral life. Trust the people — the wise and the ignorant, the good and the bad — with the gravest questions, and in the end you educate the race. At the same time you secure not perfect institutions, not necessarily good ones, but the best institutions possible while human nature is the basis and the only material to build with. Men are educated and the State is uplifted by allowing all — every one — to broach all their mistakes and advocate all their errors. The community that will not protect its most ignorant and unpopular member in the free utterance of his opinions, no matter how false or hateful, is only a gang of slaves!

It seems to me that the foundation of the democratic faith has never had an equal expression.

I urge on college-bred men that as a class they fail in republican duty when they allow others to lead in the agitation of the great social questions which stir and educate the age.

He then reviewed American scholarship in its relation to the great issues in the country's history. What had it done in the great move-

ment against chattel slavery? He instanced as typical of its spirit one of the greatest of American scholars that in Congress quoted from the New Testament to uphold slavery and offered to bear a musket in its defense.

And again it was so in the case of John Brown. "While the first of American scholars could hardly find in the rich vocabulary of Saxon scorn words enough to express, amid the plaudits of his class, his loathing and contempt for John Brown, Europe thrilled to him as proof that our institutions had not lost all their native and distinctive life. She had grown tired of our parrot note and cold moonlight reflection of older civilizations. . . . But long before our ranks marched up State Street to the John Brown song, the banks of the Seine had hailed the new life which had given us another and nobler Washington. . . . And yet the book-men, as a class, have not yet acknowledged him." For forty years, the men that had urged Abolition had been obliged to combat first of all the opposition of the highly educated class. What had that class done for other just and worthy causes? In the movements for prison reform and criminal law reform it had never taken the slightest interest. It had allowed the work of mitigating the barbarous

criminal code to be done by men outside, by members of another class. What had it done for woman suffrage, for temperance, for political regeneration? In all these movements its attitude had been one of cold hostility because each movement represented something democratic and the fixed position of the educated class was against democracy.

He turned to other problems and confronted his hearers with the record of their indifference to such a cause as that of Ireland. What educated man had ever lifted his voice against the further oppression of the Irish people? And yet, their cause was the cause upon which the American nation had been founded.

> We ought to clap our hands at every fresh Irish "outrage," as a parrot-press styles it, aware that it is only a far-off echo of the musket-shots that rattled against the old State House on the fifth of March, 1770, and of the warwhoop that made the tiny spire of the Old South tremble when Boston rioters emptied the three India tea ships into the sea.

He passed next to a subject still less palatable to his Brahmin hearers — the attitude of educated Americans toward the revolutionists in Russia.

> Then note the scorn and disgust with which we gather up our garments about us and disown the

Sam Adams and William Prescott, the George Washington and John Brown of St. Petersburg, the spiritual descendants, the living representatives of those that make our history worth anything in the world's annals — the Nihilists.

Nihilism is the righteous and honorable resistance of a people crushed under an iron rule. Nihilism is evidence of life. When "order reigns in Warsaw," it is spiritual death. Nihilism is the last weapon of victims choked and manacled beyond all other resistance. It is crushed humanity's only means of making the oppressor tremble. God means that unjust power shall be insecure; and every move of the giant, prostrate in chains, whether it be to lift a single dagger, or stir a city's revolt, is a lesson on justice. One might well tremble for the future of the race if such a despotism could exist without provoking the bloodiest resistance.

I honor Nihilism, since it redeems human nature from the suspicion of being utterly vile, made up only of heartless oppressors and contented slaves. Every line in our history, every interest of civilization, bids us rejoice when the tyrant grows pale and the slave rebellious. We cannot but pity the suffering of any human being, however richly deserved; but such pity must not confuse our moral sense. Humanity gains.

Chatham rejoiced when our fathers rebelled. For every single reason they alleged, Russia counts a hundred, each one ten times bitterer than any Hancock or Adams could give. Sam Johnson's standing toast in Oxford port was, "Success to the first insurrection of slaves in Jamaica,"— a sentiment Southey echoed. "Eschew cant," said the old moralist. But of all the cants that are canted

in this canting world, though the cant of piety may be the worst, the cant of Americans bewailing Russian nihilism is the most disgusting.

In Russia there is no press, no debate, no explanation of what government does, no remonstrance allowed, no agitation of public issues. Dead silence, like that which reigns at the summit of Mount Blanc, freezes the whole empire, long ago described as "a despotism tempered by assassination." Meanwhile, such despotism has unsettled the brains of the ruling family, as unbridled power doubtless made some of the twelve Cæsars insane — a madman sporting with the lives and comfort of a hundred millions of men. The young girl whispers in her mother's ear, under a ceiled roof, her pity for a brother knouted and dragged half dead into exile for his opinions. The next week she is stripped naked and flogged to death in the public square. No inquiry, no explanation, no trial, no protest; one dead uniform silence — the law of the tyrant. Where is there ground for any hope of peaceful change? Where the fulcrum upon which you can plant any possible lever?

Machiavelli's sorry picture of poor human nature would be fulsome flattery if men could keep still under such oppression. No, no! In such a land dynamite and the dagger are the necessary and proper substitutes for Faneuil Hall and the *Daily Advertiser*. Anything that will make the madman quake in his bedchamber, and arouse his victims into recklessness and desperate resistance. This is the only view an American, the child of 1620 and 1776, can take of Nihilism. Any other unsettles and perplexes the ethics of our civilization.

Born within sight of Bunker Hill, in a common-

wealth which adopts the motto of Algernon Sydney, *sub libertate quietem* ("accept no peace without liberty"); son of Harvard, whose first pledge was "Truth"; citizen of a republic based on the claim that no government is rightful unless resting on the consent of the people and which assumes to lead in asserting the rights of humanity — I at least can say nothing else and nothing less; no, not if every tile on Cambridge roofs were a devil hooting my words!

I shall bow to any rebuke from those who hold Christianity to command entire non-resistance. But criticism from any other quarter is only that nauseous hypocrisy which, stung by threepenny tea-tax, piles Bunker Hill with granite and statues, prating all the time of patriotism and broadswords, while, like another Pecksniff, it recommends a century of dumb submission and entire non-resistance to the Russians, who for a hundred years have seen their sons by thousands dragged to death or exile — no one knows which in this worse than Venetian mystery of police — and their maidens flogged to death in the market-place, and who share the same fate if they presume to ask why.

. . . . . .

Before the war, Americans were like the crowd in that terrible hall of Eblis which Beckford painted for us — each man with his hand pressed on the incurable sore in his bosom, and pledged not to speak of it; compared with other lands, we were intellectually and morally a nation of cowards. . . . At last that disgraceful seal of slave complicity is broken. Let us inaugurate a new departure, recognize that we are afloat on the current of Niagara, eternal vigilance the condition of our safety, that we are irrevocably pledged to the

world not to go back to bolts and bars — could not if we would, and would not if we could. Never again be ours the fastidious scholarship that shrinks from rude contact with the masses. Very pleasant it is to sit high up in the world's theatres and criticise the ungraceful struggles of the gladiators, shrug one's shoulders at the actors' harsh cries, and let every one know that but for "this villainous saltpetre you would yourself have been a soldier." But Bacon says, "in the theatre of man's life, God and his angels only should be lookers on." "Sin is not taken out of man as Eve was out of Adam by putting him to sleep." "Very beautiful," says Richter, "is the eagle when he floats with outstretched wings aloft in the clear blue; but sublime when he plunges down through the tempest to his eyry on the cliff, where his unfledged young ones dwell and are starving." Accept proudly the analysis of Fisher Ames: "A monarchy is a man of war, staunch, iron-ribbed and resistless when under full sail; yet a single hidden rock sends her to the bottom. Our republic is a raft, hard to steer and your feet always wet; but nothing can sink her." If the Alps, piled in cold and silence be the emblem of despotism, we joyfully take the ever restless ocean for ours,— only pure because never still.

Colonel Higginson says that "many a respectable lawyer and divine felt his blood run cold" when he realized the significance of these utterances.

One may perceive clearly from this and other similar specimens that democracy was with Wendell Phillips much more than a passing

belief; it was the active principle of all healthy public life that he would apply in large measure whenever any of our institutions seemed to be at fault. In this Phi Beta Kappa oration, he made some slighting reference to civil-service reform, which was bitterly resented. This inspired him to a fuller exposition of his views. He objected, he said, to civil-service reform as urged by the recognized reformers, because it was not democratic. Instead of creating an office-holding caste, as they proposed, he would solve the whole difficulty by applying democracy to it. He would have all the postmasters, custom officers and the like elected by the people instead of being appointed; for by this change both power and responsibility would rest in the people's hands, where alone it should rest.

Mr. Phillips still further alienated business and the middle class by his support of General Benjamin F. Butler, who now returned to politics and succeeded in being elected, on an independent nomination, to the governorship of Massachusetts. Butler was in bourgeois eyes the very political devil. He was believed to win his power in politics by what are called "all the tricks of the demagogue," and his success was believed to herald some kind of

proletarian uprising that imminently threatened profits. Mr. Phillips gave his support to Butler because Butler represented a protest against existing conditions and stood for the emancipation of labor. But no reasons, however good, could have excused the act in the eyes of those that hated democracy. They did not forgive Mr. Phillips; they have not forgiven him yet; they and their class will never forgive him. In the long lists of grievances this class has against him, his support of Butler is not the least ponderable.

For all this Mr. Phillips cared even less than he had cared in his younger days for the wrath of the slave-owning Interests. The world and its opinions meant very little; few things concerned him now but the causes to which he had given his life, and his constant care for Mrs. Phillips. He felt that his part in the fight was almost done.

At the beginning of 1882, he was obliged to move from the old house at No. 26 Essex Street, in which he and his wife had lived so comfortably for forty years. The city had decided to widen Harrison Avenue and the work would involve the demolition of the house. Mr. Phillips was beyond seventy; he had for his old home a very great attachment; to leave it was

a genuine hardship. He found new quarters at No. 37 Common Street, but the charm was broken. Once after the Essex Street home had been destroyed he went back and stood for a time looking at the vacant site. "It is no matter," he said; "I am almost through with it all."

One that knew him well and recalls much about him that throws light upon his character, tells me of seeing him about this time walking slowly up Beacon Hill and examining all the sights of the place with such interest as a stranger might show. His tall figure was perfectly erect, his hair was white, there was about every movement a certain authoritative and still graceful significance; he gave the impression of a man perfectly sure of himself. At the top of the hill he stood for a long time carefully observing the State House, as if he had never seen it before. Then he turned and looked out over the city, and my informant says that the image that came into his mind was that of St. Genevieve watching over her city of Paris, as depicted in the Pantheon.

That fall and early winter he was out lecturing as usual and apparently in good health. On December 3, 1883, he, with William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., was a speaker at Old South

Church upon the occasion of the unveiling of Anne Whitney's statue of Harriet Martineau. He spoke with great feeling, directing his remarks, as was his usual custom, to bear upon the question that was always uppermost in his thoughts.

Harriet Martineau saw, not merely the question of free speech, but the grandeur of the great movement just then opened. This great movement is second only to the Reformation in the history of the English and the German race. In time to come, when the grandeur of this movement is set forth in history, you will see its proportions and beneficial results. Harriet Martineau saw it fifty years ago, and after that she was one of us. She was always the friend of the poor. Prisoner, slave, wage-serf, worn-out by toil in the mill, no matter who the sufferer, there was always one person who could influence Tory and Liberal to listen.

It was his last public address. On January 1, 1884, he wrote to Patrick Collins, then a member of Congress from Boston, begging attention to the condition of Alaska, which was then without a territorial government and apparently in a state of anarchy. I think this was his last letter on public affairs. On January 26, he was seized with an acute form of heart disease. He lingered a week, suffering great agony and perfectly aware of his doom,

but always calm and cheerful. His extraordinary power of self-control that had borne him unmoved through so many trying scenes did not desert him now. "I have no fear of death," he said to his physician, who was also his friend. "I have long foreseen it. My only regret is for poor Ann. I had hoped to close her eyes before mine were shut." To another friend he declared his absolute Christian faith and confidence. His faculties remained perfectly clear; he talked cheerfully with the watchers and tried to prevent them from taking any trouble on his account. About six o'clock on the evening of Saturday, February 2, 1884, he sighed, closed his eyes and passed away like one sinking into sleep.

The immediate cause of his death was ascertained to be angina pectoris; but an eminent medical authority declared it was something else. In his judgment the incessant attacks of more than forty years had worn down the warrior's heart; under the brave and unruffled front that he presented to the world, the arrows had taken effect at last.

The funeral, in accordance with Mr. Phillips's known preference, was most simple. From the church the body was borne, escorted by colored troops, to Faneuil Hall, where it lay

for three hours, and a long procession of the poor and of the colored population passed the coffin. The tears that were shed by these were the dead man's true eulogy and even more eloquent than the great tribute that, three months later, George William Curtis paid to him at the memorial meeting in Tremont Temple, when the community made recognition of the loss it had sustained.

Ten years after Mr. Phillips's death, the city of Boston, somewhat belatedly, affixed to the wall of the postoffice building, which now rises on the site of the old home in Essex street, this tablet:

HERE

WENDELL PHILLIPS RESIDED DURING FORTY YEARS, DEVOTED BY HIM TO EFFORTS TO SECURE THE ABOLITION OF AFRICAN SLAVERY IN THIS COUNTRY.

---

THE CHARMS OF HOME, THE ENJOYMENT OF WEALTH AND LEARNING, EVEN THE KINDLY RECOGNITION OF HIS FELLOW CITIZENS WERE BY HIM ACCOUNTED AS NAUGHT COMPARED WITH DUTY.

---

HE LIVED TO SEE JUSTICE TRIUMPHANT, FREEDOM UNIVERSAL AND TO RECEIVE THE TARDY PRAISES OF HIS OPPONENTS. THE BLESSINGS OF THE POOR, THE FRIENDLESS AND THE OPPRESSED ENRICHED HIM.

IN BOSTON

HE WAS BORN 29TH NOVEMBER, 1811, AND DIED 2ND FEBRUARY, 1884.

---

THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED IN 1894 BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF BOSTON.

I can not help noticing that this tribute contains no mention of that greater cause of emancipation to which Mr. Phillips devoted the latter half of his life and which, in his judgment, included the abolition of chattel slavery. So far, I believe, this is the only public memorial to the greatest American orator.

His fame has suffered sorely and most unjustly because of the nature of the reforms that he espoused and for no other reason. If he had confined his eloquence to academic subjects or to pleading at the bar, there would now be of him a greater number of statues and memorials than perpetuate the name of Daniel Webster. The substantial truth of all that he urged against American scholarship is verified by the record in his own case. Mention of him is carefully excluded from all school books, school children are never told anything of his marvelous story, the next generation after his own grows up in practical ignorance that he ever lived. The reason for all this is solely the

fact that he was enlisted in causes unpopular among the prosperous element that controls and directs American education. He was an agitator; what that element desires is peace and silence upon the very topics that Phillips perpetually stirred. He championed the cause of hated labor, he made war upon capitalism and the wage system, he took his place with the advocates of absolute democracy, industrial and political; and for this reason alone his name is slighted and his services forgotten.

Yet if we were to consider nothing but his great gift in art, how barren would be any account of oratory that did not dwell upon his unequalled achievements! Nothing that we read of Demosthenes, Mirabeau, Chatham, Burke or Erskine compares with the amazing story of this man's command over the spoken word. Or if we think of historical accuracy, how much better than a bundle of lies is a recital of the anti-slavery struggle that dwells not at length upon his great services? Or if we consider the ethics of public and private life, whither shall we turn for another example of a man so conspicuously blameless? What better or more inspiring lesson can be drawn from all history than this life of unswerving

devotion to conscience and duty? Other men have flashed into fame by the sacrifice of one moment on some altar of patriotism. This man's sacrifice was of all the years of his life — all that comfort, leisure, peace, culture, study, learning, friendship, achievement and honor can mean to one endowed beyond almost all other men for the enjoyment of these.

In the life of Wendell Phillips, alone of all the famous men whose careers I have ever encountered, the biographer can find nothing that tarnishes the luster of the consistent whole. No excuses are demanded for him and no allowances; there is nothing about him to conceal. In public and in private life he walked without deviation from the loftiest standards. Cautious friends sometimes deplored what they called the violence of his utterances; they never had the slightest cause to regret a lapse in his conduct, not one surrender to temptation, not one instance of faltering in duty. I know not where shines another such character, nor any other study so rich in satisfaction as the record of his life. For in the words that he himself applied to Washington he was "the bright consummate flower, of our civilization and in all ways the incarnation of the highest American ideal."

Swinburne might have written for him the tribute he wrote for Mazzini:

Thou knowest that here the likeness of the best
Before thee stands;
The head most high, the heart found faithfullest,
The purest hands!

Diligently the whole story of our civil war is perverted and distorted to the minds of the rising generation. The glory for the abolition of slavery is bestowed upon men that had no feeling nor conviction against the hateful institution and were no more than the passive instruments in the hands of an aroused public opinion. Back of all these, back of the military commanders whose statues rise now in every square of the national capital, back of the misread and misunderstood Emancipation Proclamation, was the little band of Abolitionists, steadily appealing to the nation's conscience. The real emancipators of the slaves were Garrison, Phillips, John Brown and the few that standing with them upon the exalted ground of right, despised expediency and refused to compromise. Guns roar and armies march and generals maneuver in the center of all men's attention, but the real force that moves the world and is always mightier than all of these is the force of moral conviction.

But for the steady persistent agitation of the Abolitionists, at the risk of their lives and in the face of fiercest opposition, there would have been no sentiment to rescue Kansas, to hail John Brown, to recruit the Northern armies, and to fire them with the spirit of a superb consecration that carried them to the victory at last. We have loaded with honors the men that obeyed this profound feeling by leading the armies of the Union. We have rewarded with silence and obscurity many of the men that for thirty years stood and proclaimed the truth; but none have we neglected as we have neglected Wendell Phillips, champion of labor and foe of the wage system.

Oh for a spirit such as thine that wrought
Above all dust and dross of selfish aim,
That purely gave its all of toil and thought
And had no care for calumny nor blame,
Praise, prize, nor laurel, victory nor fame;
That thrust a shield between the weak and strong
And eased on lowly limbs the bondman's thong,
Great heart that knew no passion save for right,
no hatred but of wrong!

THE END

O'SHAUGHNESSY LIBRARY
COLLEGE OF ST. THOMAS
ST. PAUL, MN 55105

E 449 .P5595
Russell, Charles Edward,
1860-1941.
The story of Wendell
Phillips: soldier of the
WITHDRAWN
UST
Libraries
O'SHAUGHNESSY LIBRARY
COLLEGE OF ST. THOMAS
ST. PAUL, MN 55105
DEMCO